

Abstracts of Presentations

Part A: Literature

ALURI Medha

In the Margins of Action: A Feminist Critique of Violence in Vera Caspary's *Laura*

The basic anatomy of a crime demands a victim and a perpetrator. When the eponymous heroine in Vera Caspary's 1942 novel *Laura* returns to the scene of her own supposed death, she symbolically assumes both roles. Laura Hunt's revival disrupts generic conventions by returning an otherwise lost feminine voice to the forefront of a polyphonic and phallogentric narrative. Drawing on Hélène Cixous's seminal essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" and her critical framework of *écriture féminine*, this paper argues that beyond the physical violence often portrayed within hard-boiled detective fiction, Cixous's essay helps highlight how the erasure of voice and identity constitutes an ontological form of violence. Using *Laura* as its case study, this essay critiques the genre of hard-boiled fiction for its structural dependence on inflicting physical and ontological violence against women to propel its narrative, by highlighting the novel's disproportionate obsession with Laura's death in contrast with the relative neglect of Diane Redfern's. Lastly, this paper dedicates its research to highlighting the significance of engaging with literature that is outside the literary canon and often eclipsed by its more widely recognised adaptations or authors. Researching texts like *Laura* allows for a space for nuanced and varied conversation about women's persistent survival within the hypermasculine genre of hard-boiled detective fiction during the 1940s and serves as evidence that the feminine subject can overflow the boundaries of the beautiful corpse and transform a genre into a space where women are no longer the static sites of projected violence, but the authors of their own identities.

CAO Shihan

Carnival as Elegy: Incomplete Bakhtinian Carnival and Historical Specificity in Kong Dashan's *Journey to the West* (2021)

Kong Dashan's film *Journey to the West* records the absurd journey of Tang Zhijun, an outdated UFO magazine editor, who leads a group of marginalized people to search for alien signals. The film appears to be a typical Bakhtinian carnival, but its cinematic language and narrative structure reveal its inherent incompleteness. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's carnival theory, this study argues that the film temporarily builds a carnival square, through its mockumentary genre's parody of official authority, and the crowning and decrowning of Tang Zhijun. However, the departure of his companions and the unidirectional linear time structure destroy the collective co-presence and regenerative time that carnival demands, thus causing the carnival collapse. This incompleteness is an aesthetic choice with historical specificity. It reflects that a post-idealist contemporary China, where the collective enthusiasm for cosmic exploration faded, and the collective subject of carnival disintegrated. Here, the carnivalesque spirit can only survive in the form of a solitary individual elegy.

CHAU Lai Yee Renee

From Louise Ho to Mary Jean Chan: An Analysis of Generational Shifts in the Role of English and Hong Kong Postcolonial Identity through Metapoetry

Hong Kong Anglophone poetry has been developing since the 1970s and has flourished recently, with more Hong Kong-affiliated writers achieving international recognition, which includes Eric Yip and Mary Jean Chan. This essay argues that Hong Kong Anglophone poetry has undergone a significant generational shift, visible through metapoetry. While first-generation poets such as Louise Ho treat English as a site of both subjugation and empowerment, the newer generation, exemplified by Mary Jean Chan, negotiates broader cosmopolitan and intersectional identities amid the city's transition from the handover era to contemporary sociopolitical uncertainty. Through the lens of metapoetry, the poets' reflection of their role as poets writing in the former colonial language, their evolving positioning in postcolonial identity is revealed. It demonstrates how Hong Kong identity evolves from a sense of transience in the late pre-handover period, to a rise of local identity after 1997, and more recently to an embrace of international and intersectional identities. The Hong Kong school of Anglophone poets actively engages with and extends the metapoetic tradition, shaping the distinctive identity of Hong Kong Anglophone poetry.

CHEN Donglin

Gendered and Generational Diaspora in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* and *Dottie*

As a post-colonial writer, Abdulrazak Gurnah's works explore the theme of diaspora, which is related to memory, trauma, identity, and belonging. Through the novels *By the Sea* and *Dottie*, this essay discusses how the two novels reveal the differences in memory, identity, and healing within diaspora through the contrasting experiences of first-generation male exiles and second-generation female immigrants. Khachig Tölölyan believes that diaspora is not a simple migration or dispersion, but "a process of collective identification and form of identity." Therefore, diaspora can not only be understood as moving from one place to another. It also involves how a person remembers the past, how to talk about himself, and how to gain social recognition and a sense of belonging. A comparison of *By the Sea* and *Dottie* shows that not everyone experiences the same diaspora, and what I want to emphasize is that diaspora will be affected by gender and generation. Tölölyan's theory avoids simplifying diaspora into geographical mobility. It understands diaspora as a process about memory, recognition and compromise. In this way, the first generation of male diaspora in *By the Sea* shows silence and misunderstanding, while the second generation of female diaspora in *Dottie* is overwhelmed by lost family history, everyday survival, and social bias. This essay does not only understand Gurnah's diaspora writing as migration, but focuses the internal differences of diaspora. Through comparison, this article can provide reference for diaspora subjects of different genders and generations to restore memory and reconstruct identity.

CHEN Jianing Janine

Beyond the Human: Posthuman Subjectivity in Olga Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*

Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk's contemporary novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* tells the story of a series of murders from the perspective of Janina Duszejko, an elderly woman who ultimately reveals herself as the killer to help animals seek revenge. This paper asks a basic question: what kind of existence does Janina embody beyond the normative definition of the human? Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman*, which is an authoritative text of critical posthumanism, provides an appropriate theoretical framework for examining posthuman subjectivity from multiple dimensions. This paper matches Janina's three manifestations with Braidotti's three dimensions, arguing that her cross-species identification to cross-species alliance reflects "life beyond the self," her uncontrolled human body influenced by nature shapes "life beyond the species," and her astrological way of knowing embodies "life beyond theory." These three dimensions together constitute Janina as a posthuman subject whose distinctive mode of existence challenges anthropocentrism. This interpretation makes her seemingly strange traits comprehensible as posthumanist ways of knowing and living marginalized by mainstream discourse, and opens up a posthumanist approach to Tokarczuk's broader work.

CHEN Tianyang Zoe

A Study of the Love Story Between Human and Non-Human Beings in Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl*

The paper takes Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* as the primary source. Different from most studies that focus only on the ecological crisis, it turns to the cross-species love story between the human Anderson and the non-human being Emiko in the post human context, filling the gap in research on *The Windup Girl*'s love story. It is generally believed that love does not belong to artificial non-human creatures. This paper aims to find out why there is a love story between the human and the non-human being, what the love represents and whether there is any possibility of coexistence between humans and non-human beings. Based on Ethical Literary Criticism, Li Dingqing extends the analysis to four ethical relationships. He regards "man and man" as the pursuit of good and "man and nature" as the pursuit of beauty. This paper focuses only on the two relationships to examine love and coexistence respectively. Through analysis of the love story, Emiko and Anderson's love mainly originates from their rebellion. It breaks the traditional ethical boundaries while reflecting capital's negative impacts on nature and love, reminding people to be prepared for potential conflicts and coexistence.

CHEN Yingxuan

Spatiality as Violence: A Spatial Narratological Analysis of Subaltern Displacement and Confinement in *Circle K Cycles* and “The Woman in the Closet”

This study employs spatial narratology to analyze how spatiality functions as a form of violence in “The Woman in the Closet” and *Circle K Cycles*, exploring how spatial confinements, forced displacements, and limited mobility serve as a means of violence and contribute to the formation of their subaltern identity. This research argues that spatial elements should not be considered as a mere background of the story, but a destructive, violent structure imposed on marginalized groups. In “The Woman in the Closet,” Granny Ng’s gradual withdrawal from society to a confined and limited space leads to the erasure of her subjectivity and ability to voice, rendering her marginalized status one of being neglected and forgotten by society. In *Circle K Cycles*, although the Japanese-Brazilian workers experience transnational mobility, they are confined to repetitive routes among places with limited spaces, which restrict their ability to blend into Japanese society. Through the analysis of spatial elements, this study argues that spatial repression and restricted mobility constitute a slow and continuous form of violence, which determines their subaltern identity through social isolation, forced silence, and the erasure of their identity.

CHEN Zijun

Emotional Care Labor in “The Arrangers of Marriage,” “The Woman in the Closet,” and *Ladies Coupé*

This paper examines the complexity of emotional care labor in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “The Arrangers of Marriage,” Mimi Lok’s “The Woman in the Closet,” and Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupé*. Drawing on Arlie Russell Hochschild’s concept of “emotional labor” and Pujarinee Mitra’s notion of “malignant care,” this comparative analysis asserts that women’s emotional care labor in family and intimate relationship is not only a systematic outcome of patriarchal gendered exploitation, where women’s efforts are devalued and concealed, but also a survival strategy for marginalized women to claim agency and conduct covert resistance within asymmetrical power relationships. In Adichie’s story, Chinaza tries to use her marital care to fill her husband’s imagined ideal marital script. In Lok’s story, Granny Ng’s invisible care becomes a silent declaration of self-existence. In Nair’s novel, Margaret’s “malignant” cooking serves as revenge and a weapon for her mental autonomy and spiritual liberation. Together, these works reveal women’s care labor as social labor whose value and emotional factor urgently need recognition and reward.

DING Ruyu Alyssa

The Affective Economy of the American Dream in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*
Fitzgerald is widely regarded as the chronicler of the Jazz Age, and in his novel *Tender Is the Night*, he captures American life in the 1920s, a time of leisure, wealth, and the pursuit of happiness. Drawing on affect theory, this paper argues that the American Dream operates as an affective structure that circulates through social interactions, attaches to culturally prescribed happy objects (wealth, marriage, career), and demands continuous performance as the price of belonging. In a close reading of the beach scenes in the Riviera, this paper demonstrates that Dick Diver's charm is an affective labor that covers its own price. When Dick is chasing these happy objects, he becomes a happy object himself, possessed and then thrown away by those who needed him. His quiet disappearance is not a personal failure: it is the result of cruel optimism, which is a sheer fantasy that consumes the pursuer from within. This analysis reconceptualizes Dick's failure as a failure of the affective economy of the Dream, providing a different reading of Fitzgerald's critique of the American Dream.

DUAN Liangjing Lilac

A Speech Act Theory Approach to Female Speech Predicament and Dual Resistance in Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*

This essay analyzes the Nigerian female protagonists' predicament of being able to speak but still trapped in speechlessness in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's short stories "Imitation," "Jumping Monkey Hill," "The Thing Around Your Neck," and "The American Embassy" from her short story collection *The Thing Around Your Neck*. Drawing on speech act theory, this essay proposes their active silence, as well as the author's narrative techniques, as a form of resistance. This essay argues that colonial and patriarchal power make the protagonists' speech acts ineffective through undermining the felicity conditions of their speech acts, such as refusing and distorting their true intentions and denying their legitimacy by manipulating the conventional procedure required by speech acts. The protagonists use silence to break the felicity conditions of the oppressors' speech acts, refusing to be interpreted within the framework of dominant discourse. In addition, Adichie, through the use of second-person narrative and meta-fictional technique, undermines the authority of colonial discourse at the structural level, restores the suppressed voice of the protagonists, and makes their predicament visible to readers.

FENG Anqi Felicia

Narrative as Medicine: Telling, Listening, and Intergenerational Transmission in Thi Bui's *The Best We Could Do*

This paper argues that Thi Bui's graphic memoir *The Best We Could Do* presents narrative as a form of medicine for healing intergenerational trauma within a Vietnamese American refugee family, operating through four fundamental acts: telling suppressed personal stories, non-judgmental listening, long-buried truth-telling, and intergenerational storytelling. While existing scholarship emphasizes visuality, collective memory, and family-wide reconciliation, this study shifts focus to how individual family members, Bo, Má, and Bui herself, engage in self-directed narrative healing. Drawing on Scott McCloud's closure theory, Rita Charon's cyclical narrative medicine, and Freud and Breuer's talking cure, the analysis demonstrates that comic gutters function as therapeutic spaces, nonlinear storytelling mirrors the recursive nature of trauma recovery, and verbal expression produces catharsis. Through close visual and textual examination of panel configurations, color shifts from harsh black to warmer orange, and repeated metaphors of water and motherhood, this paper reveals that Bo's confession of childhood abandonment, Má's articulation of lost children, and Bui's active listening and transmission of stories to her son each constitute autonomous healing practices. Ultimately, the memoir refutes the assumption that reconciliation must be a collective process, showing instead that narrative agency enables each family member to heal individually. Storytelling itself becomes the most persistent medicine, transforming silence into voice and pain into hope for refugee communities worldwide.

GAO Yang Sunny

Necropolitics in "Extending a Hand" and "The Woman in the Closet": Conscious Resistance and Silent Internalization

Achille Mbembe argues that necropolitics operates not only through direct killing but also through the creation of death-worlds where certain populations are reduced to the status of the living dead, stripped of political and social status while remaining biologically alive. Olumide Popoola's "Extending a Hand" and Mimi Lok's "The Woman in the Closet" both illustrate this logic through spatial confinement, devaluation of bodies and paradox of help. However, the two protagonists respond in opposite ways. Habena in Popoola's story maintains a clear consciousness of oppression and actively resists it, while Granny Ng in Lok's story gradually internalizes the necropolitical logic, coming to see herself as a disposable life. This essay examines the operation of necropolitics in both stories through spatial confinement, devaluation of bodies, and the paradox of help, as well as the contrast between conscious resistance and silent internalization as two distinct responses to necropolitical oppression.

GU Lingjie

Colonial Violence Beneath Civilized Facades: Representations of Concession Space in Yokomitsu Riichi's *Shanghai*

Through Yokomitsu Riichi's 1932 novel *Shanghai*, this paper focuses on the colonial concession spaces of 1920s Shanghai and uncovers the hidden violence beneath the facade of colonial civilization. As a material embodiment of colonial power, the concessions exhibit profound contradictions in the text. This research examines how the contradictions constructed by colonial spaces develop through the manipulation of the physical space: the glamour of the Bund masks the exploitation of workers as a result of labour, dance halls reinforce the racial hierarchy under the pretext of entertainment, industrial factories cause both physical and psychological trauma to workers, and public order is enforced by military force. This paper argues that colonial violence is not only oppression but also exists in daily spaces, social norms and individual psyches, leading to identity fragmentation, emotional alienation and existential despair. This study seeks to explore how *Shanghai* deconstructs colonial modernity through spatial representations and exposes the operation of power, capital and race in colonial rule.

HE Junjie

The Rhetoric of Silence: Migrant Experience and Narrative Strategy in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Circle K Cycles*

In Karen Tei Yamashita's *Circle K Cycles*, Japanese Brazilian migrants in Japan inhabit a liminal space of ethnic belonging and cultural foreignness. This paper examines how Yamashita deploys silence not as an absence of voice, but as a rhetorical strategy to articulate displacement, resistance, and survival. Drawing on Lisa Block de Behar's rhetoric of silence and Cheryl Glenn's theory of silence as empowering, this study argues that for ethnic return migrants, silence becomes a critical language of survival. The analysis focuses on three interconnected registers. Linguistic silence refers to the failure of language to produce meaningful communication. For example, a Brazilian worker's hollow repetition of "okay" masks dangerous misunderstanding, leading to a workplace accident that leaves him without a voice. Narrative silence is a textual strategy that refuses linear storytelling and transparent meaning, such as multilingual passages, delayed translations, and collage fragments, mirroring the migrants' dislocation. Structural silence is produced by institutional rules, spatial controls, and disciplinary practices. In each register, silence does not erase experience but re-presents it. The study extends the rhetoric of silence to transpacific migrant contexts, showing how silence becomes a critical form of testimony for those who inhabit the in-between.

HE Yuqi Cecilia

A Study of Labor Practices and Micro-Resistance in *Circle K Cycles*

The identity construction and survival struggle of the diaspora is an important topic in the study of cross-cultural literature. As the core survival mode of immigrants, labor is the key way to carry out resistance and realize self empowerment. Yamashita's *Circle K Cycles* focuses on the low skilled labor scene of Japanese Brazilian immigrants in Japan, presenting the survival state of this group under racial discrimination and capital squeeze. It is a typical text for studying the labor practice of diaspora. At present, most of the relevant studies focus on the dimensions of identity, culture and gender, and lack of systematic analysis of labor practice and micro resistance. Taking Scott's micro resistance theory as the core framework, combining the transnational diaspora of Lesser, this study analyzes the labor narrative of Japanese Brazilian immigrants. The study found that in the situation of double marginalization, immigrants use hidden strategies such as resource sharing, local control of the labor process, small-scale and mild negotiation to carry out daily resistance, and strive for independent space and safeguard the interests of the group without causing open conflict. These labor practices are not only a means of survival, but also an important way for immigrants to break through structural constraints and complete ethnic connection and identity reconstruction. This study interprets immigrant literature from the perspective of labor, makes up for the existing research gap, enriches the micro resistance research of diaspora literature and provides a more targeted analysis perspective for the labor issues of similar immigrant literature.

HE Ziqing

Intimacy in Restricted Forms: Minor Intimacies in Wong Kar-wai's *Fallen Angels*

Wong Kar-wai's *Fallen Angels* (1995) is often read as a film about loneliness, alienation, and failed communication. This reading is reasonable, because the characters are physically close to each other but often cannot respond to each other's feelings. However, this paper asks whether intimacy has completely disappeared in the film. Drawing on Lauren Berlant's idea of minor intimacies and existing studies on alienation in *Fallen Angels*, this paper argues that *Fallen Angels* does not simply show the failure of intimacy. It shows intimacy in restricted and unequal forms instead. By close readings of the Agent's cleaning of Wong Chi-Ming's room, the objects and traces he leaves behind, the clues and songs he uses to say goodbye, and He Zhi-Wu's temporary care for Charlie, I show that intimacy appears through service, traces, controlled access, and temporary availability. These forms cannot become complete relationships, but they still allow the characters to approach each other in small and fragile ways. By focusing on these small and incomplete practices, this paper argues that intimacy in *Fallen Angels* has not disappeared, but continues in indirect, practical, and often unreturned ways.

HUA Bicen Chelsey

Mobility as Containment: Mobile Subalterns in “Kloon,” “Fish Boy,” and *Circle K Cycles*

In Deepak Unnikrishnan’s “Kloon,” May-lee Chai’s “Fish Boy,” and Karen Tei Yamashita’s *Circle K Cycles*, the protagonists all migrate from underdeveloped regions to developed ones, which endows them with a shared experience and a common identity termed “mobile subalterns.” In the context of globalization, mobility is commonly assumed to equate freedom. However, the three texts subvert this fantasy, revealing that the mobility of mobile subalterns is in fact mechanisms of control. These mechanisms, explored through the concept of “containment” proposed by Francesca Esposito and other scholars, are manifested in three directions across the distinct cultural contexts of the three texts: outward exclusion in “Kloon,” downward subjugation in “Fish Boy,” and cyclical entrapment in *Circle K Cycles*. Moreover, in response to Spivak’s inquiry “Can the subaltern speak?”, evidence in the gaps between the lines argues that these mobile subalterns manage to temporarily transcend the controlling logic of containment, yet remain unable to truly escape.

JIANG Zheng Zoey

Defamiliarizing the Anthropocentric Justice: A Close Reading of Olga Tokarczuk’s *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*

In Olga Tokarczuk’s crime fiction *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, the dominant Polish rural community frames wildlife hunting as a just, legal, and culturally noble pastime, but the protagonist and narrator Janina consistently fights against it. Since existing discussions on Janina’s anger, emotional stance and systemic resistance have left the human-centric justice she challenges underexamined, this study asks: how does Tokarczuk use narrative form to challenge normalized perceptions of justice and reimagine a more inclusive definition of justice? To address this question, this essay draws on Rosi Braidotti’s post-anthropocentric theory as an ethical foundation for centering non-human life and Viktor Shklovsky’s defamiliarization framework as a literary analytical tool. It argues that Tokarczuk positions Janina in dual anthropocentric and zoomorphic otherness to defamiliarize the taken-for-granted assumptions of justice within legal, religious and social dimensions, thereby constructing a redefinition of justice that centers the vitality and rights of both human and non-human life. This essay extends Braidotti’s post-anthropocentric strategy of defamiliarization by combining it with Shklovsky’s formal defamiliarization, offering a new reading of Tokarczuk’s novel that demonstrates how literary defamiliarization can cut through normalized perceptions to expose invisible anthropocentric violence.

JING Zikang Hector

From Compensatory Collapse to Festive Suspension: Heterotopia in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills*

Post-war Japan had suffered in every aspect, especially as its spaces were destroyed and reconstructed. Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* tells a post-war story where its protagonist, Etsuko, recalls her traumatic memories in Nagasaki after the atomic bomb. Spaces play important roles in its narration. The different apartments, where the memories took place, have been regarded as Michel Foucault's heterotopias, functioning as therapeutic spaces for victims to heal their wounds. This essay argues that different interior heterotopias, such as heterotopia of illusion, heterotopia of compensation, and heterotopia of crisis, all fall apart and become anti-heterotopias due to residents' overwhelming traumatic memories. However, Kazuo supports with another answer: the exterior spaces, featuring parks and mountain hills, turn into heterotopias of festival, providing victims a temporary suspension of time, allowing them to rid themselves of their traumas and pains, and gain peace of mind.

LEUNG Hoi Yin

England and Ireland: The Colonial Satire in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* is usually performed as a light comedy of hypocrisy in Victorian England. Though contemporary literature has speculated on the play through queer studies, religious studies and aesthetics, the play has rarely been examined through a colonial lens that combines with postcolonial theory. Drawing on Declan Kiberd's insight as the research foundation, the thesis argues that the play is a coded postcolonial critique of the colonial relationship between England and Ireland. Ultimately, the thesis restores Wilde as an Irishman who uses comedy to critique the colonial approach of England.

LI Keer

The Social Framework of Resistance: Vodou and Collective Memory in Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*

This paper focuses on Alejo Carpentier's novel *The Kingdom of This World*, which depicts the Haitian Revolution and the nation's transition from colonial rule to independence. This research poses the following question: what role did vodou play in the Haitian Revolution, and what did it do to support the enslaved people to fight against the colonizers? This question is worth studying because existing scholarship often analyzes vodou from cultural or religious perspectives, while few studies connect it with the theory of collective memory. The theoretical framework of this study is Maurice Halbwachs's collective memory, which argues that memory is not individual but socially constructed, and it reveals that shared beliefs and memories form a sense of belonging for a social group. Based on this theory, the paper argues that vodou is not a superstition but an important tool for resistance. This research breaks Western stereotypes of vodou, and reveals that collective memory sustains cultural identity and helps fight against colonial oppression.

LI Yiwen Jessica

Astrology, Poetry, and Female Anger in Olga Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*

Olga Tokarczuk is one of the most influential novelists in contemporary Poland. Tokarczuk's novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* calls for the post-humanist vision of an ethical community based on mutual care and coexistence. While current ecofeminist and post-humanist scholarship frequently acknowledges protagonist Janina Duszejko's anger, it largely overlooks how the novel systematically dismantles the pathologization of female anger, as well as explains the roles of astrology and poetry. Through post-humanist lens, the study examines how Duszejko subverts this gendered, pathologized stereotype and how she constructs an alternative rational framework outside the patriarchal logic that silenced her. Specifically, she reinterprets her rage through her understanding of poetry and astrology, transforming her dismissed emotion into a rational force. Ultimately, her unpunished escape deliberately breaks traditional revenge narrative structures and completes the redefinition of female anger, proving her anger not as a hysterical defect, but as a potent, rational weapon required to shatter anthropocentric hypocrisy and advocate for a radically inclusive post-humanist justice.

LIANG Tingqian Adrianna

"Why Should We Have to Be Useful?": Biopolitical Exclusion and Zoe-Centered Solidarity in Olga Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*

Olga Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* features Janina, an elderly woman who narrates a series of murders without confession. Tokarczuk is a Polish writer and environmental advocate. She delivered "The Tender Narrator" as her Nobel Lecture, revealing her belief in literature power within a world overwhelmed by information and assorted storytellers. This essay asks: How does the Polish state's biopolitical logic produce "useless" lives, and how does Janina's marginalized alliance resist this order through solidarity? Inspired by Tokarczuk's vision of interconnected perspective of the tender narrator, this essay responds to the gap in current scholarship, which solely focuses on Janina but rarely examines her solidarity with Oddball, Dizzy, Good News, and Boros as a collective alliance. Drawing on biopolitics and posthumanism, this dual framework illuminates how the state operates through selective elite protection and violent abandonment, while revealing how Janina's "useless" alliance transforms spaces of neglect into posthuman refuges, and wields collective defiance to reevaluate "uselessness" as a site of resistance. In a world where human worths are constantly being measured by utility, this study offers a sharp criticism of contemporary biopolitical governance and presents a model for cross-species resistance that answer Tokarczuk's call for a "world of the teapot" where tenderness becomes a political practice.

LIANG Xinzhi Stacey

Rewriting Chinese Stories: Fox Spirits in *When Fox is a Thousand* and “The Nine-Tailed Fox Explains”

Larissa Lai's *When Fox is a Thousand* and Jane Pek's "The Nine-Tailed Fox Explains" are adaptations of fox spirits' stories in the contemporary context. As Chinese mythological creatures appearing in many ancient Chinese literatures, the image of fox spirits is often objectified and marginalized. But the fox spirits in Asian diasporic female writers' adaptations are empowered and subvert the stereotype of Chinese women. This paper investigates the adaptations from the theoretical framework of adaptation studies and the perspective of postcolonial feminism, aiming to examine the specific difficulties faced by Chinese women who are trapped in patriarchy and Orientalism in the era of globalization, and their ways of resistance in coping with these predicaments. The paper proposes that the reconstruction of the image of fox spirits in these adaptations serves as a response to the stigmatization of this archetype, through analyzing the differences of portrayal between male writers and female writers.

LIN Da

Neocolonial Exploitation and Cultural Resistance: A Postcolonial Analysis of Karen Tei Yamashita's *Circle K Cycles*

This paper analyzes the neocolonial exploitation and cultural resistance of the Brazilian Japanese workers in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Circle K Cycles* through postcolonial analysis. Japanese governments in the 1990s used its immigrant policies to recruit Nisei and Sansei selectively for low-wage jobs, while making every effort to keep its ethnic purity. This revealed a new colonial system that treated the immigrant workers as labor that can be abandoned at any time. By using the theories of contact zone, cultural hybridity and multi-oppression, this paper suggests that *Circle K* is a place where cultures encounter each other. The female immigrants suffered from both the colonial system and patriarchal system. The fragmented way of narrative is a reflection of the miserable life of the immigrants. The cultural hybridity and cross-cultural female solidarity challenged Japanese government's nationalism and capitalism. This paper argues that *Circle K Cycles* criticizes the neocolonial essence of Japanese government's 1990 immigrant policies and advocates for peace, equity and cultural freedom.

LIU Yiyao

Package, Disposal and Recycling: The Politics of Rubbish and the Reconstruction of Dekasegi Identity in *Circle K Cycles*

Focusing on “package” and “disposal” metaphors in Karen Tei Yamashita’s *Circle K Cycles*, this study aims to explore the politics of rubbish and the reconstruction of the dekasegis’ (Japanese-Brazilian migrant laborer) identity. This paper, adopting a rubbish theory framework by Michael Thompson, argues that through the dialectical metaphors of “package” and “disposal,” Yamashita successfully presents a wisdom of recycling that the dekasegi implemented to redefine their identities and values. On the one hand, the excessive package of the commodity boosts superficial needs for labor; on the other hand, the use of katakana as a linguistic wrapping creates an air that appears to be inclusive, but is in fact exclusive. Along with the alienation of labor comes the lack of sense of belonging for these migrant laborers. However, via a special recycling narrative form, Yamashita is able to show the valuable initiative personality of these marginalized migrant workers. They not only recycle the concrete physical material waste but the abstract linguistic fragments, breaking the mainstream hierarchies, and then proclaim its enduring worth and self-identity. Finally, it is assumed that the *Circle K Cycles* is a new perspective created by Yamashita and allows the readers to re-evaluate the value system of both objects and a human being in a globalizing horizon. It implies that the permanent value is not an inherent value as bestowed by the mainstream society but a possible condition can be acquired through active actions.

LUI Yiyi Clary

Interpretation of Bodily Signs: Transculturation, Gender and Morality in *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*

This capstone research essay examines Iranian-American director Ana Lily Amirpour’s 2014 debut film, *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*, through a cross-cultural film study lens. It discusses bodily metaphors and their connections to gender, power, and moral issues within an immigrant context. The study aims to explore how bodily semiotics act as cultural carriers that shape immigrant identity, deconstruct gender binaries, and reflect moral dilemmas in marginalized immigrant communities. Currently, most studies focus on the intersection of horror films and feminism or solely on gender discourses, lacking a thorough analysis of the body’s role as a metaphor. Therefore, this research employs Roland Barthes’ cultural semiotics and the signifier-signified theory as theoretical frameworks, viewing metaphorical bodies as the primary research focus. Guided by Barthes’ theory, the study argues that transcultural, gender, and moral meanings are conveyed through concrete signifiers such as costumes, makeup, body posture, and tattoos, represented by characters like the Girl, Arash, and Saeed. Demonstrating that immigrant bodies serve as carriers of cultural collision and fusion, this study addresses the gap in research on transculturation and body signs. It also reflects on the fluidity of immigrant identity, the diversification of gender expression, and the ambiguity of moral boundaries, offering new insights into Iranian diasporic cinema, feminist films, and transcultural diaspora studies.

PENG Tianyi Elena

Transcending Hybrid Body: Deconstructiveness of Intimate Relationship in *Bloodchild* and *Fledgling*

Science fiction provides a rich space for imagination for cross-species symbiosis. This essay investigates the significant role of intimate relationship in cross-species symbiosis in the comparison of Octavia E. Butler's *Bloodchild* and *Fledgling*, taking posthumanism and cruel optimism as the main theoretical framework. Both works center on the intimate relationship between human and other species, embedding the power relations of species, race and gender. I examine how intimate relationship under power dynamics determine political trends. I argue that cross-species intimate relationship in Octavia E. Butler's *Bloodchild* and *Fledgling* deconstructs the boundaries of species, race and gender through deep emotional connection, which provides a space for subjectivity for resisting oppression, demonstrating a post-humanist transformative paradigm of symbiosis that transcend body politics. *Bloodchild* shows a more compromised cross-species intimate relationship with an oppressive power relation, where the intimacy provides limited subjectivity, while intimate relationship in *Fledgling* is established in a more equal and voluntary way with love and care, which becomes the essential force to resist the oppression. This comparison of the differences shows the progressive thought of Butler in posthumanism.

QIAN Yiting Foni

From External Revenge to Internal Awakening in Olga Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* and *The Empusium*

Olga Tokarczuk, the second Polish female writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, centers her work on the intertwined fate of women and nature. In *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* and *The Empusium*, women and nature are long belittled and excluded from the law, with animals becoming the spoils of men. However, the oppressed women and nature rise in resistance against the patriarchal society. Janina and Wojnicz, as the main characters of the two novels respectively, present different forms of resistance. Janina allies with nature and commits murder, whereas Wojnicz breaks down the patriarchal system by transgressing gender boundaries. This opposition points towards a new ecofeminist direction of resistance that Tokarczuk takes. This essay explores how these two novels chart Tokarczuk's evolution from external revenge to internal awakening of ecofeminism, thereby filling the gap in the research on her later ecofeminist vision. Meanwhile, it also examines the patriarchal oppression suffered by women and nature, as well as the possibility of non-violent ecofeminist alternative within patriarchal society through crossing the gender boundary.

RAO Huanyu

Animal Vengeance, Alternative Epistemology, and Ecofeminist Resistance in Olga Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*

This paper examines how Olga Tokarczuk's novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* challenges anthropocentric and patriarchal institutional orders through the protagonist Janina Duszejko. Duszejko's astrological beliefs constitute a deliberate alternative epistemological system rather than mere irrationality. Drawing on ecofeminist theory and critiques of anthropocentrism, this paper argues that Duszejko's marginalization as a "madwoman" by legal, religious, and state institutions reflects the exclusion of non-anthropocentric knowledge. Her turn to astrology which is framed as a natural, cosmic order restores moral agency to animals and justifies symbolic acts of revenge against hunters who embody institutional violence. These killings are not personal vengeance but ritual enactments of natural justice. Ultimately, Tokarczuk presents Duszejko not as insane but as a rational rebel whose alternative ethics subverts the very foundations of patriarchal-anthropocentric power. This reading invites a reconsideration of who is truly "mad" in a society that normalizes violence against the non-human.

RONG Jing

Submission and Escape: Structural Trauma and Intergenerational Conflict in Li Yiyun's *Diasporic Fiction*

The period from the 1960s to the 1990s marked the peak of the first wave of immigrants to the United States after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Li Yiyun, as a Chinese author who is one of the immigrants and a historical witness of this period, reveals the profound structural trauma and spiritual scars on those who have been displaced. This study examines two of Li's short stories, "A Thousand Years of Good Prayers" and "Son," to analyze how the Cultural Revolution as a penetrating and long-term structural trauma acts on both the parents and children simultaneously. This study argues that the trauma of two generations affected by the Cultural Revolution is jointly constrained by the same mechanism composed of collective political discourse and Confucian ethical norms. Drawing on Dominick Lacapra's trauma psychoanalysis, the older generation adopts "acting out" as a coping mechanism. They internalize the political trauma as the adherence to the Confucian normal order and are unable to break free from the identity shaped by collective narratives, while the younger generation views transnational diaspora as a path of "working through," attempting to eliminate the Confucian self attached to collective dependence and regain their subjectivity by borrowing the context of Western individualism. In the cross-cultural space of "unhomely" as described by Homi Bhabha, the two erupt into irreconcilable intergenerational conflicts due to their different trauma management mechanisms. By analyzing the cognitive fragments about characters' language, religion, marriage and gender in the two texts, this study reveals that the conflict between the two generations stems from their inability to accept each other's survival logic: one is trapped in a painful past, while the other actively seeks change and liberation. This analysis not only helps to understand the internal logic of trauma in Li's cross-cultural context but also offers a new perspective for reflecting on intergenerational conflicts and tensions within diaspora communities.

SHAO Kaiyan

Cultural Translation in Huangmei Opera Adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

When adapted into Chinese opera, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* experiences a deep "cultural translation." Focusing on the Huangmei Opera version created and played by Anqing Zaifeng Huangmei Art Theatre, this essay explores how the adaptation reconstructs the functions of nature and gender and analyzes the creative transformation and limitations brought by the reconstruction in ethical and ecological aspects. The essay argues that the Huangmei Opera adaptation replace the natural power working and positive driving force in Shakespeare's original work with ethical orders between humans. The forest space is transformed from an energetic green world to a stage full of ethical conflicts. Natural imagery is transformed from an active agent driving the plot into an aesthetic tool serving emotional expression and moral symbolism. Gender relations, meanwhile, are reshaped into a protective sisterhood in accordance with the female-centered tradition of Huangmei Opera. This cultural translation strategy has successfully integrated Shakespeare's play into the aesthetic and ethical logic of Chinese regional opera, but it has also given rise to two issues. First, it has weakened the ecological agency of natural forces present in the original work. Second, through the plotline involving the immoral behavior of the goddess Mingyue and the moral condemnation of female chastity, it has inappropriately reinforced traditional notions of chastity. This essay argues that the Huangmei Opera adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* represents not only a creative response by regional opera aesthetics to a world classic but also reveals the loss of value and gender bias resulting from the transplantation of ethical frameworks during the process of cultural translation.

SZE Wye Lam Lolita

When the Gaze Looks Back: Femme Fatale and Their Carnavalesque Inversion in Edogawa Rampo's *Beast in the Shadows* and *The Black Lizard*

In detective fiction, the femme fatale figures are often portrayed as dangerous and seductive, whose criminality has been widely interpreted as an embodiment of male anxiety toward women, thereby reducing them as passive caricatures. To reclaim their agency, this paper examines the narrative influences and power of Oyamada Shizuko and the Black Lizard, two femme fatale figures featured in *Beast in the Shadows* (1928) and *The Black Lizard* (1934) by Edogawa Rampo. The two femme fatales invert the gender hierarchy through covert and overt forms of manipulation. Shizuko absorbs the masculine notions of femininity and uses them as disguises to manipulate men from within. Her manipulation succeeds precisely because conventional notions of femininity cause others to underestimate women's capacity for agency and transgression. Although the Black Lizard also weaponizes femininity, she does so through excessive overt performance, which transforms both herself and others into objects, allowing her to shift between the roles of gazer and objectified to exert control. Reading the selected works with Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of *carnavalesque*, this paper argues that Edogawa Rampo's femme fatales destabilize the established masculine gender hierarchies with carnivalistic inversion and create new worlds that reveal the fluidity of identity and power.

TANG Yingman

A Pale Shape: Diaspora, Hauntology, and the Fractured Archive in Patrick Modiano's *Missing Person*

Patrick Modiano's *Missing Person* (1978) is a detective novel that refuses to solve its own mystery: an amnesiac investigator assembles a lost identity from directories and photographs, only to find that reconstruction deepens absence rather than resolving it. This essay argues that the novel reconceives diaspora not as spatial displacement between homelands but as a fundamentally hauntological condition of temporal exile, in which the self is permanently out of joint with its own history. Where conventional diaspora theory foregrounds the negotiation of belonging between places, Modiano reveals that displacement can operate just as forcefully across time: the diasporic question "where do I belong?" becomes, under the pressure of historical violence, the more disorienting "when do I belong, and to whose past?". Guy Roland's amnesia is thus not a clinical aberration but a structural figure for a subject whose identity is shaped entirely by absence and mediation—indexable from the outside, but never possessed from within. This hauntological reading is developed across three dimensions: the materialisation of memory into objects that substitute for recollection without restoring it; the collapse of temporal sequence through tense shifts and the novel's oscillation between *déjà vu* and *jamais vu*, which implicate the reader in the same disorientation that afflicts Guy; and the internalisation of historical rupture within a single divided consciousness, whereby the logic of postmemory is transposed from the intergenerational to the intra-subjective. Taken together, these dimensions reveal that *Missing Person* stages self-recovery as structurally impossible: not a homecoming but a haunting, not an archive recovered but a loss made permanent and form-giving. The diasporic "homeland" Modiano imagines is not a geography left behind but a destroyed temporal condition: one that can be mourned and approached through reconstruction, but never truly repossessed.

TONG Kewen

From Homeland to Hostland: Constant Oppression of African Women in Melatu Uche Okorie's *This Hostel Life*

By analyzing "The Egg Broke," "This Hostel Life," and "Under the Awning" from the contemporary Irish short story collection *This Hostel Life* by Nigerian-Irish author Melatu Uche Okorie, this research explores how sovereign power oppresses African women in the context of transnational migration, and whether their acts of resistance can break free from power structures. This research combines Achille Mbembe's necropolitics theory to analyze how sovereign power in "The Egg Broke" and "This Hostel Life" determines specific individuals of social exclusion through promoting traditional beliefs and implementing institutional management. Meanwhile, Khachig Tölölyan's diaspora theory helps to discuss how the migrant subject in "Under the Awning" falls into an unstable state of belonging between homeland and hostland after escaping necropolitical oppression. This paper argues that Okorie's three stories collectively reveal the ongoing stigmatization of African women's pre-existing identities as deviating from mainstream social norms across the social structures of homeland, the migratory process and hostland. Under such oppression, although African women constantly try to maintain their subjectivity through acts like language maintenance, physical actions and social interactions, their resistance remains a limited effect to truly break away from the existing power structure, and may even further strengthen the existing order under resource scarcity and social discipline, further presenting the subjectivity dilemma of African diaspora women being in a long-time unstable state of survival.

WANG Huirui

Racial Hierarchy, Identity Displacement, and Spatial Exclusion: What Makes Japanese-Brazilian Precariat's Living Precarious in *Circle K Cycles*

The precariousness of transnational workers has attracted much attention from the academic community since 1970s. In particular, the Japanese-Brazilian migrant labors have both Asian ethnic identity and transnational mobility attributes. They are a very representative group for studying the instability of transnational workers under contemporary capitalism. Karen Tai Yamashita's *Circle K Cycles* reproduces the survival dilemma of Japanese-Brazilian workers. Most existing studies on *Circle K Cycles* are discussed from the perspective of diaspora, centering on the ethnic identity and cultural nostalgia of Japanese-Brazilians, but rarely explain the underlying causes of the precarious situations of those migrant laborers. This research asks the following question: how does contemporary capitalism under neoliberal globalization make Japanese-Brazilian workers fall into a precarious circle of existence? Guy Standing defines the unstable migrant labor group as "an emerging dangerous class" who "has a more limited range of rights than citizens do" in his book *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. The Japanese-Brazilian workers in *Circle K Cycles* fully fit such description: they have been engaged in high-risk and insecure temporary hard work for a long time, are marginalized by society, thus lacking labor rights and social welfare. By adopting Standing's precariat theory, this essay argues that contemporary capitalism relies on the racial hierarchy to accomplish several goals: to build an exploitation system to realize the bottomless oppression of Japanese-Brazilian precariat; to disintegrate the collective consciousness of workers by continuously aggravating identity displacement; and to imprison Japanese-Brazilian precariat on the margins of society with the use of spatial exclusion. These three mechanisms interact with each other, which together leads to the precariousness of Japanese-Brazilian precariat. This essay supplements the analytical dimension of existing research, which also provides a reference for the analysis of the unstable predicament of global migrant precariat.

WANG Lihong

Intersectionality and Constrained Agency: The Production of Three Strategies of Invisibility

This essay compares Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "The Arrangers of Marriage" (2009), and argues that the invisibility of the three female characters, Clare Kendry, Irene Redfield, and Chinaza, reflects the subjectivity that in the intersection of race, gender, class, immigration status and marital status, they strategically manage visibility to survive. This essay takes Crenshaw's intersectionality and the concept of constrained agency developed by Showden, Lasalle, and Shaw as the framework, tracing how each woman's unique intersectional position produces a unique restriction form, and then generates a unique strategy of invisibility. Chinaza's immigration status is completely tied to marriage. She can only preserve her inner self in the gap of obedience. Irene is between racial marginalization and middle-class privilege, selectively switching visibility at the expense of persistent anxiety. Clare has the ability to completely pass but lacks a class safety net, so she can only completely replace her identity. The difference between the three strategies is not a matter of how much of agency they have, but the difference of the limited form determined by their respective intersections.

WANG Qihao Evan

Reciprocity and Dependence in the Language of Love in *King Lear*

In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the entanglement of love and power is foregrounded, and the ethical relationships between the father and daughters, husbands and wives are intensively overlapped with and distorted by power struggles. Authorities resort to the language of love to confirm and secure the reciprocity with their inferiors. However, in their narration of love, Lear, Goneril and Regan obscure the hierarchical difference. Lear, to sustain his status after the resignation, prompts his daughters to profess filial love in exchange for sovereignty. However, Cordelia, whose answer he expects most, refuses his offer and frustrates his design. Goneril and Regan seduce Edmund by indicating their erotic affection to earn his military service. However, their use of military images elevates him from their representative to their conqueror. In these three cases, superiors feel their vulnerability and try to confirm the service by securing it with the language of love. However, their pleas render them dependent on their subordinates.

WANG Qingyan Sylvia

Embodying Hybridity in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

This paper examines how Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* reconfigures postcolonial hybridity in Britain as an embodied, materially regulated and often painful condition instead of simply an abstract cultural synthesis. While postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha frame hybridity as a productive subversion of colonial binaries, Smith expands it to the tangible friction of bodily experience and transformation where power operates through beauty standards, religious discipline or even genetic engineering. Drawing on Terence Turner's theory of social skin and Sara Ahmed's stranger fetishism, this paper focuses on recurring bodily motifs, such as hair, teeth and genes in *White Teeth*. The paper argues that *White Teeth* challenges the essentialist notions of presenting hybridity as either a celebratory multicultural resolution or a source of anxiety, and portrays it as an unsettled, historically burdened and continually negotiated condition, marked by friction, instability and an uncertain future that cannot be fully contained within fixed cultural identities. The analysis demonstrates how *White Teeth* imagines the future of postcolonial identity as unsettled, contested and unresolved.

WANG Tianyu Sylvia

From Rational Mastery to Interpretive Uncertainty: The Transformation of Detective Fiction in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter" and Edogawa Rampo's *Beast in the Shadows*

By comparing Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter" with Edogawa Rampo's *Beast in the Shadows*, this paper explores the transformation of detective fiction from nineteenth-century rationalism to twentieth-century subjectivity. While Poe's text reflects a rational worldview based on logical reasoning, epistemological certainty and stable interpretation, Rampo rewrites this classic model in a modern unstable context. The research poses the following questions: how does the shift from nineteenth-century rationalism to twentieth-century subjectivity reshape cognition, narration and space in these two works? To what extent does Rampo's reimagining of Poe's framework redefine detective fiction as a genre from a pursuit of definitive truth to an exploration of interpretive instability? This paper uses Michel Foucault's theory of power and knowledge and Wayne C. Booth's unreliable narration theory to analyze the transformation shown by the two texts. Foucault's theory explains how knowledge in Poe's text works as a form of interpretation control, while Booth's theory reveals how Rampo disintegrates the reliability of narration through subjective perception. Through close reading of the texts, this paper argues that Poe constructs cognition, narrative and space into a stable system that can ultimately be unified by rational order, while Rampo transforms these elements into subjective and unstable structures shaped by paranoia, fantasy and interpretation of uncertainty. Through the comparison of the two texts, this paper argues that the development of detective fiction reflects the broader epistemological shift in modernity, moving from confidence in objective truth to consciousness of knowledge, perception and interpretation of instability. The paper contributes to discussions of detective fiction by examining Poe and Rampo as interconnected writers, whose works collectively reveal the genre's historical transformation.

WANG Xingyi Grace

Spaces of Mutual Influence: The Archipelagic Relation Between England and Jamaica in *Small Island*

As a second-generation Jamaica immigrant, Andrea Levy is a leading figure in contemporary British literature, renowned for her unique narrative technique in recovering the hidden history of the Windrush Generation, successfully reshaping the landscape of the postcolonial British novel. The prize-winning novel *Small Island* is Andrea Levy's most celebrated masterpiece, telling the story of the immigration of Jamaican people to post-war England, centering on the year of 1948 when the the HMT Empire Windrush arrived in England. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's framework of perceived, conceived, and lived space, alongside archipelagic thinking developed by scholars such as Stratford, this paper focuses on spatial analysis in both England and Jamaica, aiming to explore how *Small Island* constructs and reimagines the relationship between England and Jamaica as two interconnected islands. This study contributes a new spatial and archipelagic reading of the novel, revealing the mutual influence between England and Jamaica instead of a binary opposition.

WANG Zhenghui

Intimacy Beneath the Ice: On the Dual Masculine Performances and the Reproduction of Hegemonic Masculinity in *Heated Rivalry*

Rachel Reid's contemporary queer sport romance *Heated Rivalry* centers the rivals-to-lovers relationship of professional ice-hockey sport stars, Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, presenting the visible dilemma of same-sex intimacy within the domain of the highly masculine sports industry. This paper questions if male-male desire can realistically change professional sport's evaluation standards of male athletes when it becomes the narrative nature of hockey romance. With the help of Judith Butler's gender performativity and relevant research on hegemonic masculinity by Laura Grindstaff and Emily West, this paper analyzes the public rivalry, media viewing, performance in private domain and emotional negotiation through close reading. This research reveals that even though the intimacy between Shane and Ilya expands the expressive room of queer sport romance, it remains restricted under the public/private split, making them continue to perform as tough, emotion-restrained, and consumable athletes in the public domain, so as to be recognized by the professional ice-hockey sport system. This paper argues that the dual performative masculinity presented by Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov—the confrontational displays in public and intimate negotiations in private—serves as a contextual response to professional sports' disciplinary pressures, instead of challenging but unconsciously reinforces hegemonic ideal of masculinity that upholds public confrontation and emotional suppression as virtues.

WEI Xin Brittany

How Women Practice Pragmatism in the Third Space: An Analysis of Bai Liusu in Eileen Chang's *Love in a Fallen City* and Su Li-Zhen in Wong Kar-Wai's *In the Mood for Love* in the Context of Shanghai and Hong Kong

This paper analyzes how female agency is exercised through pragmatism in Eileen Chang's *Love in a Fallen City* and Wong Kar-wai's *In the Mood for Love*. By framing mid-twentieth-century Shanghai and Hong Kong as Homi Bhabha's third space, this study investigates how Bai Liusu and Su Li-zhen selectively embrace or abandon particular cultural elements as a calculated survival strategy. This research addresses a gap in existing criticism by shifting focus from the practice of cultural hybridity to the rationale behind it, that is, pragmatism. Using Deniz Kandiyoti's patriarchal bargain as a theoretical framework, the study explains how the two women strategize within constraints to maximize security. I argue that both women utilize the third space as an area of negotiation to achieve their survival goals. While Bai Liusu employs active resistance to secure financial stability through marriage, Su Li-zhen represents passive resistance by obeying patriarchal rules to protect her social reputation. The study concludes that in both contexts, romance is subordinate to practical survival, and cultural hybridity serves as a pragmatic tool for the two women to optimize life options under oppression.

WEN Yuan

The Silent Murderer: Deconstructing the Model Minority Myth as the Architect of Lydia's Death in *Everything I Never Told You*

The concept of the “model minority myth” emerged in the United States in the 1960s as a political discourse dominated by white ideology. It praised Asian Americans for their hard work, academic excellence and ability to integrate into society. With various civil rights movement occurring in the late 1960s, the model minority myth not only served as a tool to warn other minority groups such as African-Americans, it also served as a form of discipline for the Asian Americans, therefore reinforcing white authority among minority groups. In fact, prior to the emergence of the model minority myth, there were already works of Chinese American literature that celebrated the success of Chinese Americans. However, these works did not truly present the real struggles and spiritual crises faced by Asian American communities. *Everything I Never Told You* by renowned Asian American writer Celeste Ng discusses a typical “model” Asian American family in Ohio in the 1970s; however, the tragic death of the eldest daughter, Lydia, occurs in this seemingly successful family. The novel does not reveal the true cause of Lydia's death, but Ng uses delicate writhing style to suggest that Lydia's tragedy is inseparable from the oppression of model minority myth which was prevalent in American society at that time. By analyzing the cause of death of Lydia, this paper aims to deconstruct the model minority myth and reveal the identity crisis and familial trauma hidden behind the glamorous façade of a model Chinese American family. This paper exposes the real spiritual crisis of Asian American minorities, which has a profound meaning in understanding the Chinese-American literary works.

WU Ke

The Semiotics of Moral Ambiguity in *Lust, Caution*

This paper examines how Eileen Chang's *Lust, Caution* constructs moral ambiguity through the semiotic system, instead of directly revealing the inner world of the characters. This article mainly focuses on Chang's novella, and takes Ang Lee's 2007 film adaptation as a supplementary text to argue the instability of the ethical meaning in the story. Material details such as the mahjong table, body language, lighting, and the pink diamond ring are all signs, which can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Drawing on Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of the sign and Lawrence Venuti's theory of intertextuality, the study shows that meaning arises relationally and cannot be reduced to a single moral truth. Through close readings of the mahjong scene, the sex scenes, and the ring scene, the paper demonstrates how Chang's narrative restraint redirects interpretation, preventing fixed judgment of Chia-chih's final act. Lee's film translates this ambiguity into a visual form through close-ups, composition, lighting, and spatial distance. Ultimately, the paper argues that moral ambiguity in *Lust, Caution* is formally produced through shifting signs that refuse to give a clear ethical answer.

WU Yongxin

The Animal Imagery in Qiu Miaojin's Literary World: Lesbian Identity and Hard Love

Compared to its Asian neighbors such as Japan and South Korea, Taiwan's discussion and development of lesbian literature is relatively open and rich. Qiu Miaojin is one of the representatives in the Mandarin lesbian literature field, known for embarking on the queer movement in Taiwan. Her autobiographical novels, *Notes of a Crocodile* and *Last Words from Montmartre* explore lesbian identity and homosexual love, with animal imageries like the crocodile and the rabbit playing an important role in the symbolic narrative. This essay will discuss the imagery of the crocodile first, to explain its sad melody and its implication in the lesbian community's dilemma. The crocodile pretends to be human and protect its real identity, mirroring the situation of lesbian hiding themselves in heteronormative society. The essay will also discuss the imagery of the rabbit, to explore what emotional connotation is contained in the rabbit raised by narrator and her lover. This essay aims to study the lesbian identity and love expression within the animal imagery in Qiu's representative works, revealing how it depicts the realistic situation of lesbians under the authority structure of the mainstream society.

XU Wanxin Cindy

The Poetics of "Emotional Landscape": Close-Reading the Tunnel Sequence in Wong Kar-wai's *Fallen Angels*

Fallen Angels (1995) continues Wong Kar-wai's iconic theme of exploring the loneliness of urban people, their alienation from their surroundings, as well as their strong desire to bridge connections. Ho Chi-moo is the muted and marginalized flâneur figure in the film. Wong Kar-wai uses stylistic and innovative ways to reveal this character's inner world through the space of the tunnels that carry rich symbolic emotional meanings. This paper adopts a hermeneutic approach and reiterate the importance of treating *Fallen Angels* as artwork and aesthetic object. By looking exclusively at the four recurring tunnel scenes in the film and analyze filming techniques such as cinematography, lighting, sound, and editing, I argue that the tunnel sequences function as a metaphorical "emotional landscape," illustrating Ho's psychological evolution from rebellious outsider to mature, caring individual, while also shedding light on Wong's economical filmmaking style and Hong Kong's socio-political transition before the 1997 handover.

XU Wenqi

Abnormal Spaces: Structural Marginalization in “The Woman in the Closet” and “The Bear Came Over the Mountain”

This paper examines structural marginalization in Mimi Lok’s “The Woman in the Closet” and Alice Munro’s “The Bear Came Over the Mountain” through the concept of “abnormal spaces.” It explores how older characters are displaced and confined to spaces outside normal social rules, and how such spaces reveal systemic exclusion hidden beneath social care and welfare. This study argues that even as modern societies provide welfare, support, and institutional care for the elderly, they simultaneously push older people to the margins through physical and social exclusion. Using spatial theory as its framework, the paper analyzes how closets and nursing homes function as abnormal spaces: they isolate the elderly, suspend normal moral and social rules, and strip them of dignity and agency. The findings show that these spaces are not accidental but structurally produced. They allow society to manage and contain aging as a problem, while making exclusion invisible. By comparing the two stories, this paper reveals that systematic marginalization operates through space, and that care and exclusion often work together rather than against each other.

YANG Wentao

Everyday Acts as Vessels: Intergenerational Trauma Transmission in Thi Bui’s *The Best We Could Do*

Published in 2017, Thi Bui’s graphic memoir *The Best We Could Do* recounts her family’s escape from the Vietnam War and their refugee experience in America. While existing scholarship has analyzed the text as a counter-narrative to dominant American war discourse and explored its psychological dimensions of intergenerational trauma, most studies frame trauma as a product of catastrophic historical events rather than a lived experience embedded in mundane daily life. This paper addresses this critical gap by examining how unspoken trauma is transmitted through repetitive everyday behaviors and how the graphic medium uniquely visualizes these embodied processes. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre’s theory of everyday life, Claire Colebrook’s analysis of non-productive repetition, and Scott McCloud’s concept of closure in comics, this paper argues that Bui does not represent trauma through dramatic historical flashbacks but through three distinct categories of ordinary rituals: Ma’s cooking, Bo’s smoking, and the obsessive preservation of identity documents. These seemingly insignificant practices function as silent carriers of war trauma, shaping family dynamics and being passed down to subsequent generations. The gutter spaces between panels allow readers to actively participate in constructing the unspoken emotional gaps between characters, making visible what cannot be articulated through language alone. This study demonstrates that intergenerational trauma is not merely a psychological phenomenon but an embodied experience that structures all aspects of refugee family life. By giving visual form to these wordless survival strategies, Bui breaks the cycle of intergenerational silence and offers a more nuanced understanding of how trauma persists and is transformed in the everyday.

YOU Jiayi

Killable Deer, Incredible Witnesses: The Logic of Othering in Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*

This essay will investigate the structural logic of othering in Olga Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* and show that the novel demonstrates a homology between the hunting of animals and the social exclusion of marginalized human figures. Based on the postcolonial ecocriticism of Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, Bell Hooks's ideas of marginality as epistemological privilege, and Larry Wolff's analysis of how Western Enlightenment discourse presented Eastern Europe as an internal "other," this essay shows that the same classification system that deems animals "killable" also produces the narrator, Janina Duszejko, as an "incredible" witness whose testimony is systematically denied. By situating Tokarczuk's novel within postcolonial ecocriticism, this essay contributes to existing scholarship by addressing a gap: while critics such as Nowak-McNeice and Sosnowska have explored the novel's posthumanist and non-human agency dimensions, neither has fully examined the structural mechanism that simultaneously produces "killable" animals and "incredible" witnesses. The essay proposes that Duszejko's epistemological privilege is positional, generated by the very power structure she critiques, and that the novel's setting on Europe's internal margin makes visible a logic of othering typically associated with colonial peripheries elsewhere.

YUAN Chi

How Come England Did Not Know Me: The Asymmetry of Cultural Memory, Mimicry, and Contact Zone in *Small Island*

Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, set in the aftermath of World War II, traces the Jamaican migrants' mental collapse due to the fierce collision between the imagined sense of belonging and rejection from England that they consider as their "Mother Country." The novel raises a question: how can a subject reclaim subjectivity when the colonizer refuses to recognize them? The essay draws on Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory and Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the contact zone, supplemented by Althusser's notion of ideological state apparatus, to illustrate how a unilateral, fabricated memory of England was systematically implanted into colonized subjects, and explore how subjects act within, and against the asymmetrical power relations in contact zone. This paper argues that characters like Gilbert and Hortense are not passive victims of disillusionment. Rather, they utilize autoethnography, transculturation, and the creation of safe houses to weaponize the knowledge of the colonizer as resistance and form an identity that does not rely on England's recognition. Ultimately, this essay contributes to postcolonial readings of the Windrush narrative, demonstrating how marginalized subjects forge subjectivity within the imperial center.

ZHANG Jiaxin

“Peopled Else This Isle With Calibans”: In Defense of Caliban—Sexuality and Colonialism in *The Tempest*

This paper reexamines Caliban’s attempted rape in *The Tempest* from the perspective of sexuality and colonialism. Previous critics have discussed whether Caliban is really guilty, but fail to ask a more fundamental question: why is Caliban’s desire automatically read as rape? With the help of the two concepts of porno-tropics and feminized territory proposed by Anne McClintock, this paper asserts that Caliban’s behavior is not simply driven by sexual desire, but a political desire to control the island through reproduction. He wants to be the owner of the island and wants his descendants to occupy it. However, colonial discourse sexualizes this political demand, constructing Caliban as a natural sexual threat. Porno-tropics reveals the mechanism by which Europe projects their own fear of sex to Africans, and Caliban, as the son of an African witch, his blood is the original sin. Feminized territory reveals that colonial power feminizes land as virgin land. Although Caliban tries to occupy land by possessing female character Miranda in the same way as European characters, it is defined as rape. The difference lies not in the desire itself, but in who has the power to name.

ZHANG Jing Jenny

Playing for Power: How Mahjong Reinforces Feminist Agency in *The Joy Luck Club* and *Crazy Rich Asians*

Mahjong is often regarded as a traditional Chinese game of leisure and luck. Yet in Amy Tan’s novel *The Joy Luck Club* and Jon M. Chu’s film *Crazy Rich Asians*, it functions as an important mechanism to articulate feminist agency. This paper examines how mahjong reinforces feminism in both texts. In *The Joy Luck Club*, mahjong serves as a feminist safe house. It decentralizes narrative authority, enables multiple female voices to speak and to be heard, and facilitates the transmission of diasporic memory and survival wisdom. By contrast, *Crazy Rich Asians* reimagines mahjong as a contact zone and battlefield where the protagonist Rachel Chu confronts class hierarchy and cultural exclusion. Her strategic self-sacrifice allows her to redefine victory and assert individual worth, projecting a neoliberal feminist image. By comparing these two texts, this study traces a shift from communal diasporic feminism to neoliberal self-empowerment, which makes the Chinese diasporic women’s presentation more complex, diverse and layered.

ZHANG Shijia

“Can True Love Exist?”: Unreliable Narration and the Making of a Romance in *Beast in the Shadows*

This research examines Edogawa Rampo's *Beast in the Shadows* through the lens of unreliable narration to explore the romance story hidden within twentieth-century detective fiction. It poses the following questions: how does unreliable narration help to make the detective fiction read more exciting and thrilling? What elements identify that *Beast in the Shadows* is a romance story besides detective fiction? Unreliable narration is used in this fiction to create suspense for readers, making their reading experience more exciting and thrilling. Also, it makes readers identify with the narrator and have more feelings in appreciating the tragic love story between the narrator and the female protagonist. This paper argues that *Beast in the Shadows* is not only a detective fiction but also a romance story because the development of the relationship between the narrator and the female protagonist is a hidden storyline of this fiction. The portrayal of the characters relies heavily on the description of their love. The description of love reveals the theme of this fiction: true love exists between a detective fictionist and a beast in the shadows.

ZHAO Xinyu Xena

Beyond the Human Wound: Posthuman Trauma in Bacigalupi's “The People of Sand and Slag” and *The Windup Girl*

Paolo Bacigalupi is a renowned contemporary American science fiction writer whose short story “The People of Sand and Slag” (2004) and novel *The Windup Girl* (2009) are both key texts that explore the existential predicament of posthuman subjects. While previous studies have mainly focused on ecological crises, bioengineering, and anthropocentric suffering, this research asks how these issues can be interpreted as the “posthuman trauma” for both human and non-human subjects, and how their responses to it bring about different effects. This research introduces an intersectional perspective of trauma studies and critical posthumanism. This framework challenges traditional, human-centered trauma paradigms, and provides a unified lens to examine the trauma of posthuman subjects. This study argues that posthuman trauma functions as a shared experience between human and non-human subjects. Specifically, this essay demonstrates that while in “The People of Sand and Slag”, the three human characters Chen, Lisa, and Jaak, attempt to avoid the trauma of losing their natural ecology and bodies through technological modification and projecting vulnerability onto the dog, which eventually erodes their ethical responsibility, the artificial non-human character Emiko in *The Windup Girl* effectively transforms the trauma of the split between her self-will and genetically-programmed body into a positive force of resistance. Finally, this research reveals that in the posthuman era, acknowledging shared trauma is crucial for repositioning humans and reshaping ethical relations between human and non-human subjects.

Part B: Linguistics

BAI Jialin

Accomplishing Malaysian Chinese Identity in Interaction: A Membership Categorization Analysis

This paper examines how Malaysian Chinese identity is interactionally accomplished in interview talk rather than simply treated as a fixed ethnic label. Drawing on three semi-structured Mandarin interviews with Malaysian Chinese participants, the study combines membership categorization analysis with conversation analysis, with attention to sequential position, action formation, and recipient uptake. The analysis focuses on three extracts in which participants distinguish Malaysian Chinese from Malays, Mainland Chinese, and mixed Malay-Chinese identities. It argues that identity categories become relevant through clarification requests, contrastive questions, candidate understandings, repairs, and category inferences. In the data, labels such as “Malaysian Chinese,” “Malays,” and “Chinese” are not neutral descriptions, but carry assumptions about ancestry, indigeneity, political hierarchy, appearance, language, food preference, and cultural inclination. The analysis also shows that participants may accept, refine, or resist these categorial inferences, as when Daniel rejects the interviewer’s attempt to link his dislike of pork to a Malay-leaning identity. The study reveals how macro-social categories become locally meaningful through interactional practices, showing that Malaysian Chinese identity is accomplished through sequentially organized category work rather than merely expressed through pre-existing labels.

CHEN Junqi

Economic Metaphors as Ideological Resources: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of U.S. Media Discourse

This study investigates how economic metaphors function as ideological resources in U.S. media discourse from a sociolinguistic perspective. Drawing on Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory, Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis, and Charteris-Black’s critical metaphor analysis, the research examines how metaphorical framings in economic news reports shape public understanding of economic reality. Previous studies have primarily focused on the cognitive functions of metaphor or on political discourse, while relatively less attention has been paid to the ideological role of economic metaphors in institutional media contexts. Using a small corpus of economic reports from *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, this study identifies and analyzes six major metaphor types: war, military, machine, biological, natural disaster, and organism metaphors. Particular attention is paid to how these metaphorical patterns construct meanings related to competition, control, crisis, recovery, and responsibility. For example, war metaphors such as “trade war” frame economic relations through conflict and national competition, while natural disaster metaphors such as “market crash” present economic crises as inevitable and uncontrollable events. The study argues that economic metaphors are not neutral linguistic choices, but ideological constructions that influence how audiences interpret economic issues and policy decisions. By combining corpus-based methods with sociolinguistic and discourse-oriented analysis, this research contributes to the study of metaphor, media discourse, and ideology, while also demonstrating the importance of language in shaping economic perception in contemporary society.

CHEN Ruihan Ray

Can the Subaltern Speak in Commercial Cinema? A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of *Three Minutes*

This research explores the visual approaches that are used to represent the image of a working-class mother during the Chinese Spring Festival travel season in Apple's 2018 short film *Three Minutes*. Directed by Peter Chan, this movie was a wide success and billed as being completely filmed on an iPhone X. This study argues that the film's images suggest a more profound conflict. The subaltern class is made visible, but the film never really gives them a voice. This study is based on the concept of the subaltern developed by Spivak and visual grammar developed by Kress and van Leeuwen to discuss three dimensions of the film: interactive meaning, modality, and compositional meaning. The results indicate that the film always depicts the mother in a passive visual position and diverts audience's emotional focus from the structural situations of her labor. The countdown device, camera shots, and the film's fabricated truth claim all turn her experience into a tool for brand promotion. This study concludes that commercial cinema can make the subaltern appear on screen, but representation alone does not mean the subaltern has a real voice. Being seen and being heard are two very different things.

CHEN Yiyu Iris

Hedging as Sociolinguistic Practice: Epistemic Authority Negotiation in Chinese Postgraduate Writing

Previous studies on hedging have paid much more attention to the linguistic features of the text as it is seen in the context of English, but little work has been done to examine how novice writers use hedging as a sociolinguistic strategy to negotiate epistemic authority. This study illustrates that hedging in Chinese postgraduates' thesis conclusions is not only a stylistic tool, but also a strategic tool for academic socialization. Based on a qualitative discourse analysis of 20 master's theses in the field of sociolinguistics, the study shows that there is a clear stratification in hedging practices. For instance, some authors use formulaic modesty to anticipate criticism, while others are more socialized and adopt strategic hedges. For instance, methodological subjectivity is regarded as "inevitably" affecting the analysis, to fit in with disciplinary norms of reflexivity. This study is an attempt to reconceptualize hedging as a process of negotiation of epistemic rights, with the aim of providing a more nuanced understanding of the cross-cultural production of knowledge, and insights into the process by which multilingual writers are building their scholarly identities and responding to institutional expectations.

CHEN Yucheng

“What Is Left Out of These Images?”: A Multimodal Analysis of Depoliticised Nation Branding on @WeVisitMexico

This study explores how the official Visit Mexico Twitter account (@WeVisitMexico) uses words and images to build a national tourism identity. The study is based on the visual grammar framework developed by Kress and van Leeuwen. Eight posts are selected according to the number of likes during 2025. These posts are analysed in terms of three types of meaning including representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. The analysis found three main strategies used in the posts. First, constructing Mexico as a civilization symbol by presenting historical and cultural places as symbols of a great civilization. Second, constructing Mexico as aesthetic experience by showing natural landscapes as amazing aesthetics. Third, constructing Mexico as emotional home. In this way, Mexico is presented as a place where people can emotionally feel at home emotionally, rather than just viewing it as another foreign tourist destination. However, even though the @WeVisitMexico account successfully creates an attractive and appealing image of Mexico as a tourist destination, this success depends precisely on what it leaves out. The political conflicts, social struggles, and unequal realities exist just outside the frame.

CHEUNG Ho Lun Alvin

A Geosemiotic Analysis of Fat Fat Fast Food: Materiality, Place, and Multilingual Practice in Tuen Mun

In this paper, the Fat Fat Fast Food sign in Yau Oi Estate, Tuen Mun is analysed adopting the framework of geosemiotics. This paper argues that the sign’s meaning is produced through the interaction of wording, visual design, material form, and local spatial context, rather than being contained within its written language only. Drawing upon visual analysis and observations of the estate, as well as nearby shopfronts, this paper demonstrates how the sign participates in the context of everyday commercial life despite its business having closed. The persistence of the faded signboard over the shuttered front also illustrates how local commerce leaves “footprints” within a changing landscape of public housing. Rather than being a relic, the sign becomes a palimpsest of activity in the past, inscribed with reminders of changing economics and community memories, along with the material traces left by various remakings of urban spaces.

CHOW Hui To

The Non-Performativity of the Performative Male: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The term “performative male” has become a highly viral gendered neologism on social media since 2025, with distinct semiotic elements like drinking matcha, carrying tote bags, reading feminist literature, and listening to indie artists with wired headphones enregistered as iconic aesthetic markers of an ultimate “performative male.” Previous research focuses on understanding men’s behaviours through attributing them to different types of masculinities, such as hegemonic masculinity or hybrid masculinity, yet the gender issue here goes beyond simply examining the aestheticized semiotic markers. Instead, I argue that the performative male is actually non-performative as their self-branding of showing allyship with women fails to engender what they claim to do so. Using multimodal discourse analysis, 60 posts made on the performative male on Instagram are collected and analysed, with the 4 recurring themes of video parodies, real-life performative male contests, performative male starter packs, and individuals’ social commentaries demonstrating how “feminist” speech acts do not materialize into actual changes but are strategically deployed to conceal and preserve men’s masculine privilege through the borrowing of “feminine capital.” That is, the study argues how femininity can be exploited to reap benefits through aesthetically curated, failed progressive masculinity from the lens of non-performativity.

CUI Yima

Digital Nationalism in Sports Discourse: A CDA of Online Discussions About Yang Hansen

Against the backdrop of rising digital nationalism in China, sports discourse has become an important field for shaping national identity. This study examines the case of Chinese basketball player Yang Hansen by collecting 40 top-voted comments from Hupu to explore nationalism in online evaluations. By adopting Fairclough’s three-dimensional critical discourse analysis framework, this paper reveals how netizens link Yang’s performance, self-discipline, and cultural adaptation to national honor. The findings indicate that high-modal language, metaphors, and intertextuality are employed to construct a negative image of the athlete as “lazy” and “unpatriotic.” This discourse highlights the presence of banal nationalism and emphasizes the unequal power relations between fans and athletes. While nationalism strengthens collective identity, it simultaneously triggers excessive moral judgment and cyberbullying. By analyzing data from 2025 to 2026, this study supplements CDA applications in Chinese sports nationalism. Lastly, it calls for a more rational online sports culture and wishes for the balance between national expectations and the personal development of athletes in a globalized era.

DENG Haoyang

A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Light Meal Advertising

With the growth of public health awareness and the trend of health-oriented consumption, light meal advertising has become an important platform for the production and conveyance of health-related social discourse. Guided by Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar, this study conducts a multimodal critical discourse analysis of three light meal advertising posters collected from brands' websites and social media platform, aiming to investigate how the concept of health is constructed in light meal advertising, how light meals and consumer identities are co-constructed, and what ideology is conveyed and normalized in light meal advertising. The author finds that health is defined as a quantifiable and controllable state, which relies on the interaction of linguistic, visual, and numerical elements. Consumers are shaped as self-disciplined and responsible agents, being expected to stay healthy through rational food choices. By transforming health into an individual moral responsibility and connecting it with food consumption, light meal advertising conveys and normalizes the ideology of neoliberalism, healthism, and nutritionism. This study hopes to provide a reference for how light meal advertising constructs and legitimizes specific meanings of health and lifestyle, so as to affect audiences' recognition of food consumption.

DING Ning

A CDA of Daily and Double Eleven E-Commerce Discourse

Under the background of the digital economy, e-commerce platforms have been positioned in different brands, and use different discourse strategies in daily communication scenarios, but have high similarity in the promotion discourse in the Double Eleven Shopping Festival. Taking Taobao, Jingdong Mall and Pinduoduo as research objects, this paper analyzes their daily non-promotional discourse and Double Eleven promotional discourse, compares and explores the differences, and the internal driving mechanisms of discourse strategy under different circumstances. The research is based on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis framework, including three dimensions of text, discourse practice and social cultural practice. The research results show that the three platforms have different types of discourse strategies in their daily scenarios. Taobao emphasizes comprehensive and convenient discourse strategy. Jingdong Mall emphasizes quality and service discourse strategy. Pinduoduo emphasizes low price and utility discourse strategy. With the capital logic and the requirement of maximum short-term sales, all brands will temporarily give up their usual brand-oriented expression and switch to a unified sales-oriented promotional discourse system, which will bring the change of the discourse logic from brand to sales to its completion. This study fills the lack of study in systematically comparing the daily and big promotion discourse in the existing research on e-commerce discourse, and provides empirical support for understanding the relationship between commercial discourse, brand positioning, capital logic, and social culture.

FENG Xiangyang Frankie

Cultural Translation and the Construction of Success: Nike's Advertising in China and in the U.S.

The 21st century is an era of globalization, where capital, laboring and resources are flowing all around the world and transnational corporations are one of the results that globalization brings. Globalization not only brings the flowing resources around the world, but also strategies to which transnational companies need to adopt in their brand narratives like glocalization when it comes to selling commodities to different places with diverse cultures. This capstone research presents a comparative multimodal analysis of Nike's advertising in China and the United States, examining how this brand performs "cultural translation" of success by featuring elite athletes like Su Bingtian and LeBron James in its advertisements in the markets of the two countries where the ways of becoming success have many differences in different cultures. By employing visual, linguistic and discursive strategies, this capstone study aims to find out how each of the advertisement participates in and contributes to the construction of success under the negotiation ideology of transnational brand across cultural contexts which can be called cultural translation.

FUNG Shing Yan

Constructing Inequality: A Critical Discourse Analysis of FAQs on Foreign Domestic Helper Agency Websites in Hong Kong

Foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) are often referred to as the backbone of Hong Kong's economy, playing an important role in performing household duties. While stereotypes of FDHs appearing in local media coverage have been studied, there is limited attention to how FDH agency websites construct inequality through discourse. This study examines how Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sections reinforce employer-centered power relations, arguing that the agencies use "neutral" legal language to naturalize structural inequality. Fairclough's critical discourse analysis is used to provide a macro structure in this study, along with Reisigl and Wodak's discourse-historical approach and Van Dijk's ideological square as analytical tools. Data are collected from three major Hong Kong FDH agencies, including Sunlight, My Sweet Home and Technic. By identifying linguistic features in the FAQs, such as nomination, predication, modality, transitivity, and argumentation strategies, it is found that agencies construct employers as lawful in-group members while depicting FDHs as unethical workplace out-group members. This study shows that such institutional online discourses reproduce structural inequality by catering to employers' interests and ignoring FDHs' needs and advocates for agencies to include FDHs' viewpoints on public online discourse.

GAO Yuanyuan

Contrasting Official and Visitor Tourism Discourse in Hong Kong: A Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis

There are relatively few studies comparing the Hong Kong tourism discourses used on official tourism websites with visitor websites. This research builds two corpora (12 official texts and 12 visitor reviews) and takes the AntConc word frequency table to conduct a comparative analysis on official tourism discourse and visitor discourse. Based on the sub-system of attitude, graduation and engagement of appraisal theory, this research decodes the perfect image official constructs to the Hong Kong destination, and the contradictory travel experience by visitors. Drawing on the concept of recontextualization, three strategies are suggested to the official: allow contradictory narration, invite interaction, and apply authentic context. The significance of this study is to provide a theoretical comparison between official and visitor discourse analysis, and to suggest practical strategies for Hong Kong tourism marketing.

GONG Linyu

Constructing Online Moral Judgement: A Discourse Analysis of Consensus and Controversy in Subreddit AITA

This study explores how individuals construct moral positions in online interactions within an online community of subreddit, r/AmItheAsshole (AITA). The existing studies on stance and evaluation have demonstrated that language is an important means used to communicate attitude and to negotiate point of view. Focusing on the online community instead, less has been proposed on the way moral positioning varies in different consensus and dissentive situations. This study adopts a discourse analytic approach and the perspective on moral judgement is one that sees moral judgement as a type of belief that is constructed through interaction, rather than being pre-existing and manifest in the language. The findings suggest that familiar frames of discussion, categorical evaluation and high levels of intensification are used in high consensus discussions. On the other hand, in high controversy debates, alternative views will be offered, toned down, and the issues explicitly discussed, which will result in more negotiable and unstable forms of moralizing. The study suggests that disagreement on the internet does not necessarily reflect a value conflict, but also a process of situation-building which occurs in language. The results contribute to studies on stance-taking, appraisal and digital discourse as they reveal the role of the language in relation to collective moral judgment in online interaction.

GUO Fengfeng

Identity Construction in Xiaohongshu Food Posts: A Linguistic Discourse Analysis

Previous research on digital food discourse was often focused on Western social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, leaving a research gap in how identity is constructed on Chinese social media platforms like Xiaohongshu. This project aims to explore how Xiaohongshu content creators build specific identities in Hong Kong food recommendation posts to attract readers. Following Bucholtz and Hall's framework, this project analyzes 15 highly-engaged Xiaohongshu posts with more than 1,000 likes. The analysis shows that content creators use linguistic strategies, such as using identity labels like "HK master's student" and phrases like "No Ads" to establish themselves as "insiders" or objective reviewers. These strategies help build trust and authority among readers. This project contributes to sociolinguistics by confirming that Bucholtz and Hall's framework is applicable to Chinese social media and provides new evidence for how digital language transforms regional identity in a globalized city like Hong Kong.

HONG Ju Angie

Being a "Friendly Foreigner": A Multimodal Analysis of Evan Kail's Cross-Cultural Identity on Douyin

As the number of foreign internet celebrities in China has grown, many scholars have conducted research on their identity construction and representation of China. While existing studies have examined general strategies employed by foreign influencers, they overlook the co-occurrence of friendliness and foreignness in their identities. This study conducts a multimodal discourse analysis of the identity construction of an American internet celebrity, Evan Kail, through his videos on Douyin, and investigates how his mixed persona makes him accepted by Chinese viewers. This study collects Kail's five most-liked videos and examines the multimodal strategies that construct his "friendly foreigner" identity. Kail's friendliness is shown in his speaking Chinese with direct gaze, localizing expressions and prioritizing Chinese subtitles, thereby making him closer to the Chinese audience. His foreignness is marked by third-person camera angles, his expressions of surprise, and explicit comparisons between China and the US, reminding the viewers of his foreign status. Together, Evan Kail's "friendly foreigner" persona enables him to resonate with Chinese viewers and become a credible external voice to promote China. This study further contributes to the MDA research on intercultural communication by investigating the complexity of a foreign influencer's identity construction.

JI Wenting

Spaces of Re(creating) Value for Waste: A Geosemiotic Analysis of Vintage/Thrift Stores in Shenzhen

While sociolinguistic research has acknowledged the discursive productivity of “waste” as a social construct, the study of waste remains emerging and relatively uncharted within this field. Vintage and thrift commodities, for instance, are scholarly deemed as a particular form of waste, yet insufficient research has examined how their value is negotiated in relation to human and the material environment. Recent developments in linguistic landscape studies have expanded the scope to include the entire physical environment and situated discourses, showcasing novel ways to explore the spaces of value creation. Informed by these perspectives, this essay investigates how vintage/thrift stores in Shenzhen geosemiotically construct second-hand objects as valuable (or sometimes valueless), and how this discursive (de)construction of value enables young Chinese consumers’ identity performance. Adopting a researcher-as-participant approach and employing observation, photograph, and field notes, three geosemiotic ways of waste’s value change are revealed: building interactive exhibit spaces, integrating discourses of commerce, sustainability, fashion, and subculture, and presenting objects’ layered time-space. A place of multi-dimensional ambiguities is hence created, allowing the full dialogicality of language and consequently youth’s various identity performances. This study contributes to a better understanding of the discursive (de)construction of waste and of human actors’ interaction with it.

JIA Yu

A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of To Summer’s Eastern Modernism Aesthetics

This study examines how Chinese fragrance brand To Summer constructs its “Eastern Modernism” brand aesthetics through language and visual representation. Drawing on Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis and Kress and van Leeuwen’s visual grammar, the research analyzes data from perfume product pages and brand story page of To Summer’s Taobao store. The study argues that Eastern Modernism is constructed through three dimensions: Chinese identity, internationalization, and the nostalgia and hybridity of “Modern Shanghai.” Chinese identity is constructed through cultural imagery, classical vocabulary, place names, and symbolic visual elements. English is used to construct international orientation. Meanwhile, “Modern Shanghai” is a symbol of colonial hybridity and nostalgia. To Summer transforms cultural symbols into consumable objects in the background of Chinese state ideology of cultural confidence, and globalization.

LAO Yuhui Larissa

A Stance Triangle Analysis of Hong Kong and Mainland Diners' Evaluations of Sushiro in Online Reviews

This study compares how Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese diners evaluate Sushiro in online reviews. Using Du Bois's stance triangle, the research analyzes data from OpenRice and Dianping to explore regional identity construction. The findings reveal that Hong Kong diners often position themselves as food experts by using technical terms and pedagogical tone, reflecting a post-prestige stage focused on the whether the quality of food and service meet personal standard. In contrast, Mainland Chinese diners position themselves as aggrieved victim, prioritizing psychological experience and customer-centricity, often using high-strength emotional language to seek social empathy. While both groups reach an intersubjective consensus on the compensation of food quality and reasonable price, their alignment diverges regarding the evaluation strategies: Hong Kong diners tend to provide logistical proof to express their dissatisfaction with the service failure, while Mainland diners consider it as a violation of moral fairness and utilized narrative with personal details to be authentic. This research enriches the linguistic turn in digital discourse and provides cultural insights for hospitality in the Greater Bay Area.

LEE Heng Ying Amelia

Cross-Border Marriage and Stance Formation: A Comparative Study of Social Media Discourse

Under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, Hong Kong and China have a close relationship, which caused the cross-border relationship primarily manifested across multiple dimensions, including immigration policies and distribution of social welfare. "Hong Kong-Mainland China conflict" has been a heated debate, and the tension further fuels the stereotypes on Mainland Chinese women. In this research, we analyse the discourse and explore how the stereotypes formed via stance and stancetaking on discussion forums. Focusing on the cross-broader relationship between Hong Kong men and Mainland Chinese women, we analyse how participants on social media platforms position mainland Chinese women in accordance with the social historical, political background, economic development of Hong Kong and China with their own personal experience to form their stance and the stereotypes on Mainland Chinese women.

LENG Yuxin

Constructed Intimacy and Digital Interaction: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Intimate Address Terms in Chinese Social Media

This study investigates the widespread use of intimate terms of address and its social meanings in Chinese social media. In conventional circumstances, these addresses are reserved for use with relatives and close relationships, while nowadays they can be found in commercial, communal, and emotional interactions. The research adopts Fairclough's critical discourse analysis as the framework, and analyses 45 sets of conversations collected from Taobao and Rednote in multiple dimensions. The study discovers that in commercial conversations, intimate addresses have become standard requirements to release customers' defensive psychology and constructed certain trust and belief. While in communities that shared the same interests, these addresses play a lubricative role to construct identity recognition, and in emotional conversations, they help to reduce the psychological distance of digital space. This study reveals the phenomenon of disconnection between discourse and real emotions, and the exaggeration of addresses reflects the transformation of society. This analysis not only makes supplement on language evolution in digital communication but also provides critical perspective of the reconstruction of power relations and commercial logic in digital era.

LI Jianrong

Colonial Legacy and Postcolonial Reconstruction: A Linguistic Landscape Study of the University of Hong Kong's Main Building

This study explores the linguistic landscape of the Main Building of the University of Hong Kong, analyzing the colonial legacies and post-colonial reconstruction. Based on 172 photos of public signs shot in the Main Building area and taking the framework of geosemiotics and post-colonial theory, we seek to explore the tensions in the signs from language choice, spatial distribution, materiality, and digital integration. The finding shows a stratified order of languages: colonial English remains dominant in enduring heritage plaques; English-Traditional Chinese bilingualism represents the official compromise while English still taking dominance and priority; Jyutping as a subversive mimicry, reflect localized identity of Cantonese; Simplified Chinese and Pinyin are shown in marginalized and temporary spot; Latin is merely symbol of elite tradition. The addition of QR code further constructs a virtual linguistic landscape where language hierarchy is hidden. This study illustrates how linguistic landscape could reflect power relations, historical memory and politics of post-colonial era's Hong Kong.

LI Jiayu

Shop Positioning and Brand Images Reflected by Linguistic Landscapes in Central Station and Hong Kong Station

This paper explores shop positioning presented by linguistic landscapes of shops in two connected MTR stations, Central Station and Hong Kong Station. By collecting and analyzing the photos of diverse shops, having different origins and expansion extents, I examine language choice, prominence, and indexical brand names in shop linguistic practices. Under the geosemiotic perspective, this study adopts the concept of code preference to analyze visual semiotics of language choices. Through this, I analyze how English prominence indicates international customers and global identities and how Chinese prominence targets customers with Chinese backgrounds and de-emphasizes the construction of global identity. By applying the indexical concept, this paper shows desired images of shops reflected by language choice in brand names. This paper integrates the two analytical categories of origination and expansion to show Chinese prominence in in-store linguistic landscapes and English dominance in brand names, which indicates major target customer, identity construction, and desired images of shops in the two stations.

LI Zhenni

Constructing AI and Labor: A Critical Discourse Analysis of NPR's Coverage

The replacement of labor by artificial intelligence has become a social hot topic of global concern. The media influences the public's perception of the relationship between technology and employment through discourse construction. This article takes five reports on artificial intelligence and labor substitution from National Public Radio (NPR) in the United States as research samples. This research uses Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis, and finds that NPR reports shape public perception through discourse. These reports reflect differences in power and ideology behind them. Media discourse is not neutral, but serves specific interests and power relationships. The use of critical discourse analysis helps us understand the complex relationship between technology and society.

LIANG Yishan

Cultivating “LifeWear”: Branding Discourse and Power Femininity in Uniqlo’s Global Expansion

During the global expansion of multinational corporations, they face the challenges of adapting to local community’s cultural preferences while maintaining the consistency of the brand’s identity. Drawing upon Machin and Thornborrow’s concept of branding as discourse and Lazar’s “power femininity,” this paper investigates how the Japanese apparel brand Uniqlo navigates this challenge. The study argues that Uniqlo constructs the “LifeWear” identity by commodifying female empowerment and leverage universal values to transcend the cultural barriers while maintaining its functional minimalist roots. With the implementation of Jewitt’s framework of the multimodal analysis and Kress and van Leeuwen’s visual grammar, the paper examines Uniqlo’s regional Instagram marketing campaigns and online stores. Three key examples are selected for analysis: the “Uniqlo: C” collection which promotes a comfortable wear for the female professional and conveying a sense of subverting the male gaze; the UV Protection series which adapt the local functional preference and empower women’s outdoor freedom; and for the global ambassador interviews, which reinforce an independent lifestyle focused on self-fulfillment rather than catering to external gaze. Ultimately this paper contributes to linguistic research by illustrating how a global brand employs specific visual and textual modalities to aestheticize empowerment, creating a universally adaptable discourse of modern femininity.

LIN Tongtong Tonia

Negotiating Solidarity: A CDA of “Full-Time Children” Debates on Douyin

This study investigates the “full-time children” phenomenon in China by analyzing digital discourse on Douyin. Employing critical discourse analysis and intergenerational solidarity model, the study examines 60 comments under a viral video to see how family obligations are negotiated online. The result shows that supporters, opponents and neutrals use different linguistic strategies to express their different understandings of intergenerational relationships. Supporters focus on normative and affectual solidarity, reconstructing filial piety as a form of negotiated intimacy. Opponents mainly use structural solidarity and functional solidarity to emphasize the structural risks of leaving the labor market. Meanwhile, neutrals pay attention to structural solidarity and use factual comparisons to place the “full-time children” phenomenon in specific economic foundations such as parents’ pensions. The interaction in the comment section shows that family is playing the role of economic buffers and providers of security. The result shows that the full-time children discourse interacts with tensions in contemporary Chinese society regarding the labor market, the welfare system and the changing definitions of personal value, which presents more flexible and inclusive intergeneration in contemporary Chinese society.

LIU Liuhong Lora

Mainland Students in HK: Cantonese Competence, Language Anxiety and Living Comfort

This qualitative study examines the relationship between Cantonese competence, language anxiety and living comfort among the postgraduate Mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong. Based on communication accommodation theory (CAT) and audience design theory (ADT), it aims to investigate the role of language anxiety in the implementation of communication strategies and in cross-cultural adaptation. A total of 4 female participants were interviewed using a semi-structured one-on-one interview method, and they were divided into four types: high competence–low anxiety, high competence–high anxiety, low competence–low anxiety, and low competence–high anxiety. The results indicated that although Cantonese competence is a foundation for daily life, the impact of language anxiety is more significant in shaping living comfort and social integration. High anxiety inhibits convergence and audience design, which results in linguistic avoidance and social alienation, whereas low anxiety allows for flexible strategy use despite limited Cantonese competence. Locals' accommodative behaviours reduce anxiety and promote communication, and non-accommodative behaviours worsen psychological pressure. This study extends existing research by highlighting language anxiety as a core psychological barrier, complementing CAT and ADT, and offers implications for supporting Mainland students' adaptation in Hong Kong's multilingual context.

LIU Xiaotong

Constructing “Lying Flat”: A Discourse Analysis of Experiential Narratives on Threads

“Lying Flat” (LF) has become an internet buzzword. This essay explores how Threads users construct different types of LF experiences through discourse strategies. Zhang et al. (2025) notes that LF is a youth's response to a highly competitive environment, and can be divided into two types: active and passive. However, this explanation cannot fully explain the complex experiential expressions on social media. Based on Martin and White's appraisal theory, this article conducted discourse analysis on 30 public Threads posts. Research mainly identified distressed, resting, unemployment-related, anti-competitive, financially-planned, helpless, family-supported LF experience. The most frequently used discourse strategies include intensification, temporal quantification, and denial. For example, netizens utilize time quantification expressions like “every day” to present LF as a long-term dilemma. Meanwhile, by denying external misunderstandings, users redefine LF as a helpless choice under social pressure. Therefore, this project explains that the meaning of LF is not fixed, but is constantly negotiated, strengthened, and redefined through different discourse strategies in specific online discourse. This study supplements the discourse analysis perspective to the LF research and demonstrates the applicability of appraisal theory in analyzing social media experiential narratives.

NING Xiangping

The Diachronic Evolution and Contextual Adaptation of Online Chinglish on Rednote

Although Online Chinglish has become a prominent form of creative language use in Chinese online communication, it has been mainly analyzed synchronically. Diachronic analysis of Online Chinglish in lifestyle-oriented online platforms like Rednote is still lacking. In this study, a qualitative case-study approach was adopted to discuss four typical Online Chinglish expressions (two Chinese-English hybrid and two innovative alphanumeric abbreviations) by using authentic public posts as illustrations that were collected from Rednote from 2020 to 2026. The research is guided by an integrated dual-dimensional analytical framework, which is diachronic in the course of semantic change and synchronous in the course of cross-contextual adaptation. The initial, development and stabilization stages of the expressions are traced and their functional variation in different contexts is analyzed. The results show that Online Chinglish is structurally hybrid, formally short, semantically flexible and pragmatically markerized. It evolves in a semantic way, across a stable evolutionary pattern of semantic generalization, synchronic contextual diffusion and functional diversification, the result of the combination of linguistics efficiency requirements, platforms' specific ecosystem and socio-cultural acceptance of digital expressions. This study offers theoretical advances to the traditional sequential analytical model, by capturing the simultaneous temporal and contextual linguistic change, and is an empirical diachronic contribution to digital sociolinguistics and World Englishes studies. In practical terms, it provides actionable insights for digital language education, design of cross-cultural communication strategies and inclusive social media language governance.

QIN Yuanjiang

Biographical Indexicality and Social Identity of Marriage: A Sociolinguistic Discourse Analysis

This study adopts a sociolinguistic perspective to examine how individuals aged 25–35 construct stable indexical meanings of marriage in their everyday discourse. Drawing primarily on Sharma's framework of biographical indexicality, together with labeling theory and Silverstein's model of indexical order, the research analyzes semi-structured interviews with 10 participants of various marital statuses. The findings reveal that marriage is consistently indexed in this age group as "responsibility," "obligation," "risk," and a de-romanticized form of "getting by." These meanings are predominantly realized through equation rather than mere association; that is, discourse directly asserts that "marriage is responsibility." The study identifies intergenerational transmission, crisis marketing via public opinion, and task flattening as the primary mechanisms driving the solidification of these meanings. While individuals demonstrate certain forms of resistance, the analysis shows that marriage, as a social institution, has acquired a robust and continuously reinforced social identity through discourse.

TANG Fengrui Harrison

Translanguaging and Identity Negotiation in Mainland Chinese Secondary EFL Classrooms

Although secondary classes in Mainland China officially require the use of English only in their English courses, teachers and students still often use a mixture of English and Chinese in their interactions. This paper discusses the role of translanguaging in the negotiations between teachers and students around their multilingual identities in classrooms. In contrast to code-switching, which treats systems of languages as distinct units which are alternated, translanguaging perceives all types of linguistic resources as single repertoires that flexibly and emergently apply to a certain context, making meaning and constructing identities. The study uses multimodal discourse analysis as the method of analyzing a single episode in the mixed-language to study one amongst the common ones. Analysis shows that translanguaging, through the creative integration of verbal and non-verbal resources, enables teachers to shift from authoritative instructors to supportive facilitators and students to transition to active bilingual students (as opposed to passive learners). These results demonstrate how the concept of translanguaging puts the policy of monolingualism to the test and establishes a more equal relationship in the classroom. The paper helps fill the gap in the knowledge about the dynamic, multi-modality of translanguaging in actual EFL situations and identity negotiation.

TANG Xiaoqi Suki

A Study of Moral Judgment and Face-Work in Computer-Mediated Communication

This study examines how moral judgment is made in computer-mediated communication, focusing on (im)politeness strategies and face-work practices in the Reddit subforum r/AmItheAsshole (AITA). Drawing on Goffman's concept of face-work and the (im)politeness frameworks proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Culpeper (1996), the study analyses 12 interactions taken from one family-related AITA post labelled "Asshole." Using qualitative discourse analysis, the research explores how commenters and the original poster (OP) negotiate moral judgments during online interaction. The findings show that the verdict systems on AITA might impact the construction of moral judgment. Even without explicit verdict labels, users still reveal clear moral positions, and the interactions often develop around those positions. However, the study also argues that verdict labels do not determine how moral judgment is expressed; rather, it depends on the actual use of face-work practices. Thus, the study helps to understand the complexity of moral judgment in online settings, especially how it is constructed online as a complicated and interaction process rather than just a simple label.

WANG Jiayue

Constructing Digital Intimacy and Engagement: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of T.O.P. (Transform Project) Videos on Douyin

The rise and popularity of Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, have transformed parasocial interactions from a traditional relationship into a more reciprocal digital intimacy. This study analyzes how T.O.P. (Transform Project), a Chinese idol group, utilizes multimodal resources to construct intersubjectivity and promote audience engagement on Douyin. This study is based on multimodal discourse analysis and integrates Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar, Jewitt's concept of multimodal coherence, and Zhao and Zappavigna's intersubjectivity framework. The dataset consists of 10 Douyin videos released by T.O.P. within the past three months and a detailed analysis. Videos including two and more group members are excluded in order to analyze each person's performance clearly. It examines how visual, aural, and linguistic elements work together to create a sense of intimacy between idols and their followers. The findings suggest that videos with direct gaze, first-person perspectives, and interactive cues like direct asking could gain higher engagement. In contrast, videos with less multimodal interaction equals to positioning viewers as observers instead of participants, thus getting lower engagement. This study argues that digital intimacy is not produced spontaneously but is constructed by multimodal resources. It also shows how the "selfie framework" gets adapted into dynamic short video environments to boost the relationships between idols and viewers.

WANG Xinxing

A Multimodal Discourse Analysis on Skincare Products Posters of L'Oréal and Estée Lauder

With the development of digital media, social media platforms have become an important location for cosmetic brands to establish their identity. Based on social semiotics and using the visual grammar framework of Kress and van Leeuwen, this study conducts a multimodal discourse analysis of 30 skincare posters that L'Oréal and Estée Lauder have published on their official accounts at Xiaohongshu in 2025. The differences in the visual strategies of both brands are systematically compared on the basis of the three dimensions of representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning. The study found that in terms of representational significance, L'Oréal prefers narrative representations and everyday scenes, while Estée Lauder focusses on conceptual structures and technological symbols. In terms of interactive meaning, L'Oréal creates closeness through direct eye contact and highly saturated colours, while Estée Lauder conveys authority and distance through verted glances, closed eyes and colours with medium to low modality. In terms of composition, L'Oréal uses a left-right structure to convey the information logic, while Estée Lauder reinforces the absolute visual focus on the product through a centred composition. Both visual grammatical strategies systematically serve the respective differentiated brand positioning and reveal the internal mechanisms of visual communication of cosmetic brands in the age of social media.

WANG Yongjia

Translanguaging Practices on Internet Identity Construction of an American-Born Chinese Influencer: A Case Study

This study adopts critical discourse analysis and multimodal discourse analysis as the framework to investigate the translanguaging practices of an American-born Chinese influencer on the Chinese social media platform RedNote. The research examines how the influencer strategically utilizes her language repertoire to construct specific online identities and engage with her virtual audience. The findings reveal that she systematically employs translanguaging strategies such as code-switching, metalinguistic commentary acts, strategic errors, and visual translanguaging. These practices are crucial to crafting three core identity positions. First, the “earnest learner” persona, characterized by language mistakes, cross-linguistic comparisons, and inviting audience correction. The second one is a “high-context westerner,” marked by direct syntactic transfer and literal translations that foreground her essentially English-dominant cognitive framework. The third one is the “cultural bridge” profile, achieved through the creative translation of specific cultural concepts and the symbolic blending of Chinese and American cultural elements. The study argues that the influencer transforms her linguistic limitations and cultural hybridity into performative and marketable identity assets. This strategic self-presentation facilitates authentic audience connection and serves to attract and build a community of followers who have deep interests towards cross-cultural communication. Ultimately, the research demonstrates that translanguaging on social media is a powerful socio-cultural practice for identity negotiation, authenticity performance, and community building within the digital economy.

WEI Jiali

Performing the Self With Labels: Identity Construction on Rednote

On algorithm-driven social media platforms, identity labels such as “ESTJ,” “Your Internet Best Friend,” and “Photographer” often appear in user profiles. These labels function as performative resources of user construction and negotiating identity. This study examines how Rednote content creators and ordinary users perform identity through profile labels. Based on 150 user profiles (75 content creators and 75 ordinary users), Butler’s theory of performativity is used as a labeling method, and labels are divided into four types: descriptive, relational, affective, and resignified. The study reveals that two systems of different identity strategies: content creators almost completely rely on descriptive labels (93.5%), use searchable labels optimized for algorithmic visibility, and perform searchable selves oriented toward machine readability; ordinary users adopt hybrid strategies, prioritize emotional resonance and interpersonal connection, and perform connectable selves. Resignified labels mainly function through stance-taking, emotional ambiguity, irony, and self-deprecation. This study expands Butler’s theory of performativity to the context of algorithm governance, which has contributed to the practice of digital identity, platform governance, and sociolinguistics of Chinese social media.

WEI Luqing

Affection or Discipline? A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Tiexin Xiaomian'ao Metaphor

Past family discourse studies have shown that metaphors can express intimacy and power at the same time, but the term “Tiexin Xiaomian'ao,” used to describe daughters in the Chinese family discourse, has not been fully explored. This paper argues that this seemingly affectionate label carries a duality: it not only conveys emotional warmth, but also implies the expectation of obedience and traditional gender roles. Based on 74 posts and comments on the Rednote platform, this study uses critical discourse analysis to integrate Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory and Yeh and Bedford's dual filial piety model. The following remark is a prime example from the Anti-stance corpus: “We are Xiaomian'ao. What is a Xiaomian'ao? It's an object!”. It directly deconstructs the logic of metaphor and reveals how the physical attributes of the source domain map onto expectations of daughters as instruments of parental emotional comfort. The analysis identifies three competitive stances: the Pro-stance naturalises daughters' care as an innate trait; the Anti-stance reframes it as unequal emotional labour; the Neutral-stance de-genders this trait through developmental or educational attribution. This paper contributes to linguistic research by showing how an apparently innocent family metaphor becomes a site of ideological negotiation, simultaneously reproducing and challenging authoritarian filial piety and gender essentialism in contemporary Chinese discourse.

WU Na

Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Dove's Products and its “Real Beauty” Projects in the United States and China

This paper statistically and systematically analyzes and interprets Dove's dual branding strategy in the United States and China through a multimodal critical discourse analysis both considering the commercial product and the non-commercial “Real Beauty” social project. The study examines six matching advertisements and self-esteem related videos produced by Dove from 2019 to 2026 and supports the notion that Dove has a tiered corporate feminism promoted through a market-driven strategy. It systematically analyzes the ideological resistance against the restrictions towards feminine beauty standards in the United States to stake its claim as a politically progressive ally, while simultaneously removing feminist messages from politics in China and subjecting them to marketised, product-driven conceptions of self-improvement. This research comprehensively demonstrates how the global brand gains profits from the customers using feminine and multimodal strategies to create resonance with the audience and fit the local market. The findings contribute to expanding theories on corporate co-optation by uncovering the context-based aspects of the appropriation of ideology in global marketing.

WU Tonghui Luna

“It Keeps You Clean and Healthy!”: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of the Marketing Discourse of Intimate Feminine Cleansers on Taobao in China

In the digital era, feminine intimate cleansers are widely marketed on Taobao, China’s largest e-commerce platform, with promotional messages emphasizing “cleanliness,” “health,” and “empowerment,” while the gendered ideologies and bodily discipline embedded in such discourse remain underexplored in non-Western contexts. This study aims to fill this research gap by examining how the marketing discourse of feminine intimate cleansers constructs meanings of women’s “cleanness and health” and reproduces gendered bodily self-surveillance. Adopting multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) and feminist critical discourse analysis, this study analyzes the verbal and visual semiotic resources of promotional materials from six best-selling brands on Taobao. The findings reveal three core discursive strategies: medicalization of surveillance, framing the intimate body as a site of potential contamination, and constructing “cleanliness” as an empowering narrative. These strategies normalize bodily self-surveillance among women, reproduce dominant gender ideologies, and naturalize disciplinary practices as empowerment. This study extends MCDA and feminist discourse research to non-Western contexts and sheds light on hidden ideologies in feminine hygiene marketing, providing insight for critical consumer literacy.

XIA Shuyang

China’s Discourse Construction of Naturalized Athletes’ Identities at the 2026 Winter Olympic Game

Influenced by the traditional notion of bloodline purity and the ideology of advocating self-independence in sport, China has a long history of rejecting sports naturalization. However, with the development of globalization and the realistic need to build a powerful sports country, China began to naturalized a small number of foreign athletes with excellent achievements. Among these naturalized athletes, Gu Ailing and Lin Xiaojun are the most representative figures. This study adopts frame analysis and critical discourse analysis to identify the media frames that Chinese news media employ for the national identity of these two naturalized athletes and the discursive strategies of the news articles. The findings illustrate that the media frames surrounding Gu Ailing and Lin Xiaojun have salient differences not only on the complexity but also the priorities. While Chinese media linked Gu Ailing’s naturalization with bloodline and cultural re-connection, narratives about Lin Xiaojun tended to associate more with personal career continuation.

YE Lei

Constructing Credible Leadership: Narrative Positioning in Interviews with Mellody Hobson, James Gorman, and Masayoshi Son

Mellody Hobson, James Gorman and Masayoshi Son are the three CEOs whose credible leadership identities in the public interviews are studied in this paper. Based on the idea of narrative positioning put forward by Soreide and through qualitative narrative analysis, this paper will explore how speakers can present themselves in good light and distance themselves from bad images. According to the analysis, the three CEOs are all building credibility through their personal biographies, professional abilities and moral character, but in different ways. Hobson's leadership has been resilient, grateful and concerned about society, especially in relation to race, gender and community. Gorman has developed a more humble and stable leader identity that is based on institutional stewardship and responsibility to clients, employees and shareholders. Son shows himself as a successful young man who aims to prove his value. In short, CEO interviews are not merely about business, but they are also public stories that give people an idea of the legitimacy, authority and moral values of leadership.

YI Xinyang

A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Masculinity Construction in Men's Fragrance Commercial Videos

This study aims to investigate how men's fragrance brands use advertising discourse to construct masculine images and the social implications derived from these representations. The data for this research consists of commercial videos for men's fragrances on YouTube. These advertisements are launched by brands under the world's three most influential fragrance companies. Employing multimodal critical discourse analysis as the methodology, this paper analyzes visual and auditory resources within the video data. Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar as well as van Leeuwen's multimodal phonology are adopted as theoretical support. This research concludes that the construction of masculinity is inherently unstable. Furthermore, the findings reveal that while depictions of masculinity tend to demonstrate the new man style, certain brands have begun to embrace more open and diverse male images.

YIN Wenyi

Examiner-Child Interaction in A2 Key for Schools Speaking Tests: A Preliminary Conversation Analytic Working Paper

This working paper provides a conversation analytic examination of the interview between two candidates, Asia and Vittoria, in a Cambridge English A2 Key for Schools speaking test videotape made publicly available by the Cambridge English website. It analyzes the ways in which the interlocutor attempts to cope with some moments of interactional trouble and what ways of coping open up opportunities for child candidates to demonstrate their speaking ability. The paper draws on research which views the performance in an oral test as an interactionally co-constructed process and analyses selected extracts some parts of the test, supported by the official Cambridge examiner comments. The analysis indicates that interactional trouble in this young learner test can not only be identified as a total misunderstanding but also as a communication failure, and also contains short answers, little elaboration, pauses, and grammatically imperfect, as well as intelligible answers. The examiner's practices are to let go of minor errors, to ask a more specific follow up question, to keep the task going, and to refrain from intervening too quickly in candidate-to-candidate interactions. The following practices illustrate the institutional control of the test with the opportunity for candidates to generate more language.

ZHANG Caixia

Is the Ideal Life for Sale? A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Sojourner Influencers in Dali, Yunnan

Drawing on Machin and Mayr's multimodal critical discourse analysis and Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar, this study examines how the ideal life in Dali is produced by two Douyin lifestyle bloggers through linguistic and visual resources. This study analyzes how consumption is de-commercialized while still serving commercial purposes. It finds that the bloggers construct three main identities: healthy living practitioners, quiet slow-life healers, and self-care practitioners. The first identity presents Dali as natural, healthy, and rural through local ingredients, self-cooking, less takeout, and low-priced groceries. The second turns leisure consumption, such as drinking tea, reading, and handicrafts, into emotional repair and self-healing. The third repackages flowers, skincare products, and everyday objects as practices of self-love and body care. Dali becomes a key meaning resource, providing spatial imagination for health, healing, and self-care. This study argues that the ideal life in Dali does not escape consumption logic. Instead, health discourse, slow-life healing discourse, and advertising discourse work together to repackage consumption as a way to escape urban pressure, repair the self, and restart an ideal life.

ZHANG Kerui

Negotiating Feminist Labels: Female Creators' Everyday Narratives on Xiaohongshu

Previous studies on feminist discourse in the Chinese digital context have documented the stigmatization of the term “feminism.” However, there is still a research gap regarding how feminist practices operate without clear labels. This study investigates how female creators on Xiaohongshu construct their identities and implicitly participate in feminist practice through everyday narratives. Drawing on Bamberg’s three-level narrative positioning and Kress and van Leeuwen’s visual grammar, this study conducts a close reading of 20 short videos. Three narrative mechanisms are identified: the redistribution of shame and moral responsibilities; the use of time to connect personal experience with histories; and the establishment of affective alignment with audiences through intimate address forms, direct gaze, and eye-level framing. Although none of the creators use explicit feminist hashtags in their videos, their content consistently challenges patriarchal norms. Drawing on Liao’s concept of “unpopular feminism,” this study argues that this de-labelled practice reflects a strategic negotiation of China’s regulated digital environment.

ZHANG Shitong

A Corpus-Based Study of TED Speeches on Environmental and Climate Issues Under the Perspective of Proximization Theory

Based on Cap’s proximization theory, this study selects five TED talks on climate and environmental issues from 2024 to 2026 and builds a small corpus of 9,699 words. This study manually annotates and verifies the corpus following the STA model of proximization theory, and employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the distribution characteristics of the three proximization strategies. The study finds that: (1) in climate change speech discourse, spatial proximization accounts for the highest proportion (8.804%), with the internal entities of the center (“we”, “us”) as the core (5.186%), and the speakers construct collective identity and shared responsibility through inclusive “we”; (2) temporal proximization, which accounts for 6.249%, is dominated by modal verbs (2.021%), and constructs the necessity, feasibility, and certainty of action through words like “must,” “can,” and “will”; (3) axiological proximization accounts for the lowest proportion (0.917%), with positive and negative values being roughly equal, and serves the purpose of alerting and motivating. The three types of proximization strategies jointly serve the discourse goal of constructing approaching threats and mobilizing collective actions. This study provides a new theoretical perspective for environmental speech discourse analysis and has reference value for climate communication practices.

ZHANG Xiaolu

A Critical Discourse Analysis of NGO Advocacy on Women's Education in Afghanistan on X

This working paper demonstrates how international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on X use discourse to carry out advocacy on the Taliban's restrictions on women's education in Afghanistan. Although previous research has mainly focused on the consequences of Taliban policy, especially its human-rights and social impact, less attention has been paid to how NGO advocacy is linguistically and discursively performed within digital context. To address this gap, this research adopts Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis to analyzes 24 posts from three NGO accounts on X. The analysis shows that NGO advocacy operates across three levels. Textually, the posts use rights-based wording, strong negative evaluation, high modality, and binary semantic framework to construct women's education as an urgent human-rights issue and Taliban policy as illegitimate persecution. Discursively, for a broader dissemination, NGOs perform advocacy on X through institutional voice and platform mechanism to invite international audiences to take actions. For social practice, this discourse reproduces a human-rights common sense, delegitimizes Taliban rule, and reinforces NGOs' moral authority within a transnational advocacy order.

ZHANG Yuning

Constructing National Identity: A Comparative Analysis of China's and Singapore's Official Tourism Websites

As tourism websites play significant roles in international tourism, this paper examines how China and Singapore use visual and textual elements to express and construct their national identities on their tourism websites and what identities are constructed through the multimodal texts. In this paper, Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar and Machin's concept of recontextualization are used to analyze the visual and textual resources on these two websites and identifies their identity construction process. This paper finds that China's website constructs itself as a country with rich culture by using high naturalistic modality and long distant shots to show natural and historical landscapes, while Singapore's website constructs itself as a hospitable and harmonious country by using high sensory modality and close social distance to show modern vitality and multicultural harmony. Moreover, the analysis of recontextualization shows that substitution is used by both countries to construct positive national identities, while China's website uses deletion to stress its native culture and Singapore's website uses addition to present its multiple cultures. Both China and Singapore construct their identities based on sociocultural context.

ZHOU Shuhan

Stance, Materiality, and Multispecies Regulation: A Multimodal Study of Pet-Related Signs

As pet ownership expands across East Asian cities, urban spaces are increasingly negotiating the terms of multispecies co-presence through signage. Yet existing linguistic landscape research has largely treated signs as static texts, overlooking their material and spatial dimensions as regulatory acts. This study examines how pet-related signs construct multispecies urban space through stance, materiality, and spatial trajectory, drawing on a corpus of 51 signs collected through photographic fieldwork at two contrasting sites: OCT Park, a commercial lifestyle complex in Shenzhen, and three public parks administered by Hong Kong's Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). Adopting a multimodal discourse analysis framework informed by Pennycook's spatial repertoires and Lind's semiotic assemblages, twelve signs were selected for close analysis using Du Bois's stance triangle. The analysis identifies a fundamental distinction between two institutional stances: a legal-regulatory stance in the LCSD corpus, which positions the pet as a managed liability and the owner as a compliance subject, and an affective-moral stance in the OCT Park corpus, which frames the pet as a companion and recruits owner affect through commercial persona construction. These stances are further materialized through contrasting spatial logics—threshold-based exclusion in public parks versus distributed inclusion across commercial infrastructure. The discussion argues that both assemblages remain structurally anthropocentric: LCSD manages animals as regulatory objects, while OCT Park instrumentalizes them as economic subjects. Neither constitutes genuine multispecies recognition in the posthumanist sense. The findings suggest that the most materially welcoming assemblage can simultaneously be the most commercially captured.

ZHOU Tong

Constructing Same-Sex Relationship Instability in Douyin Comment Discourse

This paper analyzes how the instability of same-sex relationships is constructed in Douyin comments. The study does not consider instability to be an inherent feature of same-sex relationships, but focuses on how commentators explain, evaluate and question the difficulties faced in maintaining same-sex intimacy. The study adopts the qualitative discourse-analytic method, combined with critical discourse analysis and stance/positioning theory, and analyzes the comments on topics such as homosexual love, coming out, nominal heterosexual marriage, role classification and long-term relationship insecurity. The analysis found three main interpretation frameworks. First, some commenters attribute instability to the internal culture of the queer community, such as hookup logic, appearance-based selection, superficiality and lack of commitment. Second, others explain from the perspective of structure and practical pressures, including family expectations, marriage norms, coming out, geographical distance, age and economic restrictions. The third type of comments is rebellious, questioning the fixed role classifications such as 1/0 and TP, as well as the deep-rooted heterosexual norms in the marital relationship script. This study believes that Douyin comment discourse both reproduces and challenges dominant norms of stable and legitimate intimacy.

ZHU Yixuan

A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Luxury Branding on Instagram

This study focuses on the digital marketing strategies of luxury brands on visual-centric social media. It takes 30 official Instagram posts from The Row and 30 posts from Gucci as research samples. The study applies multimodal critical discourse analysis and the visual grammar theory proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen, and analyzes the representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning of visual images and textual captions. The study finds that the two brands adopt two opposite visual styles to build brand images: The Row uses minimalist visual expressions such as low-saturation colors, symmetrical composition and ample white space, while Gucci relies on maximalist visual features including high-contrast colors, full-frame layout and elaborate decorations. Both brands set up aesthetic entry barrier through their unique visual discourses. These entry barriers help the brands filter target audiences and strengthen social class distinction. The study proves that building aesthetic entry barrier via contrasting styles has become a new digital marketing tool for luxury brands. Luxury brands use high-end aesthetics to transform material capital into cultural capital and mark social identity. This research enriches the application of multimodal discourse analysis in luxury brand communication, and provides new perspectives for understanding the relationship between digital visual marketing and social class differentiation.